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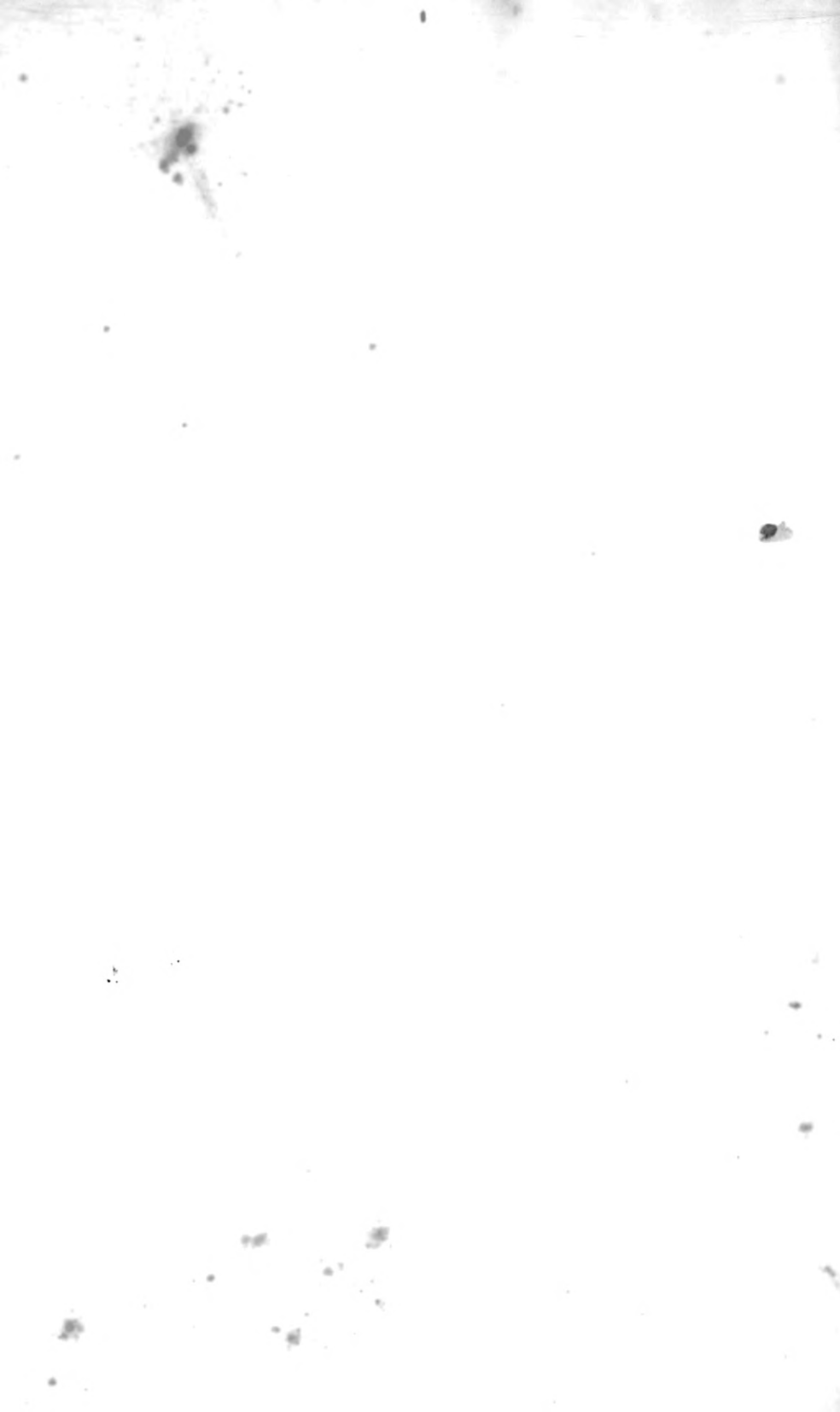




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PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON

THE FOUR HOLY GOSPELS,

INTENDED CHIEFLY FOR DEVOTIONAL READING.

IN TWO VOLS.

ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN; AND YE SHALL FIND
REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—*Jeremiah* vi. 16.

GRANT, O LORD, THAT IN READING THY WORD, I MAY NEVER PREFER MY OWN SENTIMENTS BE-
FORE THOSE OF THE CHURCH IN THE PURELY ANCIENT TIMES OF CHRISTIANITY.—*Bp. Wilson*.

VOLUME I.
ST. MATTHEW—ST. MARK.

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ADVERTISEMENT.

It will suffice to state that this Commentary is not designed for controversial readers; nor yet for those who approach Scripture chiefly in a critical spirit. Without by any means consciously avoiding real difficulties, or (as the writer hopes) overlooking the results of sacred criticism, his aim has been to produce within moderate limits a Commentary which, (like the blessed Volume it professes to illustrate,) should address itself to readers of *all* classes. The writer wished that what he wrote might prove useful to unlearned and learned, alike; old and young; wise and simple; the teacher and the taught. His Notes are designed for all who study the Gospel in a devotional frame of mind; who read it in order to *live* by it; and desire, while they read, to have their attention aroused, their heart informed, and their curiosity in some degree gratified.

It is thought that, besides its use in the closet, such a Commentary as the present, especially if it be studied for a few minutes beforehand, might be made available for reading aloud in the family. It is hoped that in parochial schools also, and for Sunday-school teachers, the work may be found useful.

And this shall suffice. May He by whose SPIRIT the Gospel was given, bless the work, and forgive all its faults!

BLESSED LORD, WHO HAST CAUSED ALL HOLY SCRIPTURES TO BE WRITTEN FOR OUR LEARNING; GRANT THAT WE MAY IN SUCH WISE HEAR THEM, READ, MARK, LEARN, AND INWARDLY DIGEST THEM, THAT BY PATIENCE, AND COMFORT OF THY HOLY WORD, WE MAY EMBRACE AND EVER HOLD FAST THE BLESSED HOPE OF EVERLASTING LIFE, WHICH THOU HAST GIVEN US IN OUR SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST.

AMEN.

PUT OFF THY SHOES FROM OFF THY FEET: FOR THE PLACE WHEREON THOU
STANDEST IS HOLY GROUND.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON

THE FOUR HOLY GOSPELS.

ST. MATTHEW.

CHAPTER I.

1. *The genealogy of CHRIST from Abraham to Joseph.* 18. *He was conceived by the HOLY GHOST, and born of the Virgin Mary when she was espoused to Joseph.*
19. *The Angel satisfieth the misdeeming thoughts of Joseph, and interpreteth the names of CHRIST.*

1 THE book of the generation of JESUS CHRIST, the son of David, the son of Abraham.

THE beginning of the New Testament is meant to remind us of the beginning of the Old. The resemblance in the language is intended to imply that there is a certain relation or resemblance between the two Testaments also: so that the one is, in many respects, the very counterpart of the other. They have been compared to the two Cherubims of glory, which overshadowed the mercy-seat with their wings, and turned their faces one to another;—between which also God dwelt in brightness, *(a)* and from between which He communed with men. *(b)* Genesis v. is found to begin as follows,—“This is the book of the generations of Adam.” Now Adam “is the figure of Him that was to come.” *(c)*

The man CHRIST JESUS is the second Adam, *(d)* in whom we behold the beginning of a new Creation. For, “if any man be in CHRIST, he is a new creature; old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.” *(e)*

Our LORD is here called “the Son of *David*, the son of *Abraham*,” because the promise of the Messiah was especially given to those two great saints; to Abraham, in Gen. xxii. 18; to David, in 2 Sam. vii. 12. And “the Son of David” comes before “the son of Abraham,” in order that “the stone which the builders rejected” may be made “the head of the corner.”

How attentive should we be to *the first words* of the Gospel of CHRIST!

2, 3 Abraham begat Isaac; and Isaac begat Jacob; and his brethren; and Judas begat Pharez and Zara of Tamar.

Besides the Blessed Virgin Mary, only four female names are found in this genealogy,—Tamar, guilty of incest; Rahab, the harlot; Ruth, a Moabitess; Bathsheba, an adulteress. Nothing is said of Sarah, and Rebekah, and Rachel, and the other holy matrons of whom we elsewhere read. Our LORD’s descent from

(a) Psalm lxxx. 1.
(d) 1 Cor. xv. 45.

(b) Exod. xxv. 20, 22.
(e) 2 Cor. v. 17.

(c) Rom. v. 14.

these four persons, (*all*, probably of Gentile extraction,) may have been recorded, partly in order to intimate the interest which the Gentile world has in *CHRIST*; and to prepare men's minds for the ultimate call of the Church,—His Spouse,—from among the Heathen; partly, in order to teach us that He came into the world to bear our shame. And we learn from what is here written, that the disgrace of the ancestor is no real blot upon the descendant; who may yet be very holy, and reflect back his own brightness on all who ever went before him.

Concerning Rahab and Ruth however, much is said in the way of actual commendation in Holy Scripture: see the two next notes. And Thamar receives memorable notice in the Book of Ruth. (*f*) “She hath been more righteous than I,” exclaimed the patriarch Judah concerning her. (*g*) Indeed we should be very careful *how* we venture to speak of persons whose *history* indeed, but not whose *character* is set down in the Book of Life.

The History *may* mislead us, or rather, it may be mistaken by us. For example, few readers of Genesis would have suspected that Esau was in God's sight a “fornicator,” and “a profane person.” (*h*)

4, 5 And Phares begat Esrom; and Esrom begat Aram; and Aram begat Aminidab; and Aminidab begat Naasson; and Naasson begat Salmon; and Salmon begat Booz of Rachab;

“The harlot Rahab” is one of the “cloud of Witnesses,” whose Faith is noticed by St. Paul; (*i*) and whose works are appealed to by St. James, ii. 25. For her remarkable history see Joshua ii. and vi. This is the only place in the Bible where her marriage is recorded.

And Booz begat Obed of Ruth; and Obed begat Jesse;

For the lovely history of Ruth the Moabitess, see the Book in the Bible which bears her name. It was all in consequence of her faithfulness (*k*) that she won for herself so glorious a place in the Book of Life.

6 And Jesse begat David the king;

David was the youngest of Jesse's eight sons, (*l*) and “fed his father's sheep at Bethlehem.” (*m*) God “took him from the sheepfolds . . . to feed Jacob His people, and Israel His inheritance.” (*n*)

And David the king begat Solomon of her *that had been the wife* of Urias;

Instead of telling us that this was *Bathsheba*, the Spirit gives the name of *her murdered husband*; and thus reminds us of David's sin and Bathsheba's shame.

7 And Solomon begat Roboam;

The names which follow, (with slight diversities in the spelling,) are the names of the kings of Judah, whose acts are recorded in the Books of Kings and Chronicles.

8 And Roboam begat Abia; and Abia begat Asa; and Asa begat Josaphat; and Josaphat begat Joram; and Joram begat Ozias;

It is not meant that “Ozias,” (that is, Uzziah,) was *the son* of “Joram” or Jehoram, but his grandson's grandson; the names of three kings of Judah are therefore here left out; namely, Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah. This reminds us that there are evil names which God will at last, assuredly, blot out of the Book of Life. (*o*)

Perhaps these three generations are omitted because they were the result of the unholy marriage of Jehoram with Athaliah, the daughter of the wicked Ahab and

(*f*) Ruth iv. 12.

(*i*) Heb. xi. 31.

(*m*) 1 Sam. xvii. 15.

(*g*) Gen. xxxviii. 26.

(*k*) Ruth i. 11—17.

(*n*) Psalm lxxviii. 70, 71.

(*h*) Heb. xii. 16.

(*l*) 1 Sam. xvi. 10, 11.

(*o*) Exod. xxxii. 33.

idolatrous Jezebel.(p) Uzziah, who married Jerusha, the daughter of Zadok the priest,(q) is the first name which becomes restored to the line of our Lord's ancestors after the flesh. We are reminded by all this of the danger, and perhaps the guilt, of contracting marriage with an ungodly family.

9, 10, 11 And Ozias begat Joatham; and Joatham begat Achaz; and Achaz begat Ezekias; and Ezekias begat Manasses; and Manasses begat Amon; and Amon begat Josias; and Josias begat Jechonias and his brethren about the time they were carried away to Babylon:

This "Jechonias" is called in the Old Testament *Jehoiakim*. Unless the Jechonias in this verse and the next are distinguished, it might be thought that the numbers in ver. 17, do not correspond with the names which had gone before.

12 And after they were brought to Babylon, Jechonias begat Salathiel;

The king mentioned in verse 11, was the father of this "Jechonias;" who is called in the Old Testament *Jehoiachin*, or *Jeconiah*, or *Coniah*. The curse of dying childless had been solemnly pronounced upon "Coniah, the son of Jehoiakim," by the mouth of the prophet Jeremiah.(r) Salathiel, here mentioned, must therefore have been only his adopted son.

And Salathiel begat Zorobabel;

Zorobabel, (whose name means "He of the dispersion of Babylon,") was governor of Judah; a famous type as well as ancestor of our Lord. He it was who, with Jeshua the high-priest, rebuilt the temple of Jerusalem after the Captivity;(s) being sustained in the task by the prophets Haggai and Zachariah.(t) For the sense in which Salathiel is here said to have *begotten* Zorobabel, see the note on St. Luke iii. 27.

13 And Zorobabel begat Abiud;

This only means that Abiud was *descended remotely* from Zorobabel; he might be called his "son" in the same way as Joseph, in ver. 20, is called "*son of David*." For Zorobabel's immediate descendants, see 1 Chronicles iii. 19—24. The names which here follow, down to Joseph, are nowhere found in the Bible except in this place.

14, 15, 16 And Abiud begat Eliakim; and Eliakim begat Azor; and Azor begat Sadoc; and Sadoc begat Achim; and Achim begat Eliud; and Eliud begat Eleazar; and Eleazar begat Matthan; and Matthan begat Jacob; and Jacob begat Joseph the husband of Mary, of whom was born JESUS, who is called CHRIST.

This then is "the genealogy of CHRIST from Abraham to Joseph," as the heading of the chapter rightly informs us. But, since our blessed Lord was born of the Virgin Mary,—it may be asked, Why was not *her* genealogy given rather than Joseph's? And, since Joseph was not our Lord's real Father, How does *his* descent from David show that our Lord also was "made of the seed of David according to the flesh?"(u)

These questions cannot be fully answered in a few words. It must suffice to point out that it was necessary at first, to keep the mystery of the Birth of CHRIST hidden from the unbelieving eyes of men, and indeed from the Powers of Darkness also: and *that* was why it seemed good in the providence of God, that Joseph should not only become the Virgin's wedded husband, but be looked upon and be spoken of for a certain space of time as our Lord's Father likewise.(x) Accord-

(p) 2 Kings viii. 16—18, 26.

(q) 2 Kings xv. 32, 33.

(r) Jer. xxii. 24—30.

(s) Ezra iii. 2; v. 2; Hag. i. 14.

(t) See Ezra v. 1; Hag. i. 1, 12; ii. 2.

(u) Rom. i. 3.

(x) St. Matt. xiii. 55; St. Luke ii. 48; iii. 23; St. John vi. 42.

ingly, Joseph's genealogy from David is here given. And next, observe that, in the eyes of a Jew, Joseph's descent from David was quite enough to establish our LORD's legal descent likewise from the same king, notwithstanding His miraculous Birth; because when Joseph married the Blessed Virgin her Holy Son was accounted to be *strictly* Joseph's son, and to be descended from the same line of ancestors as Joseph himself.

But lastly, it is to be borne in mind that, from the very language of Scripture, there can be no doubt that the Blessed Virgin was herself of the same family as Joseph. She came to Bethlehem "to be taxed," as well as her husband: *(y)* therefore she was of the house and lineage of David, as well as he. The angel promised that the holy Child which should be born of *her*, should occupy "the throne of *His Father David*;" *(z)* therefore she must have been of David's line. And Zacharias, who knew the mystery of our Saviour's Birth, blessed God for having "raised up a horn of Salvation *in the house of His servant David*." *(a)*

We must not be surprised to meet with *some* difficulties in a Revelation which comes from God: rather should it surprise us that we meet with so few. Nor is it reasonable that beings like ourselves, who really know nothing more about God and His ways than He has been pleased to tell us, should sit in judgment, as it were, on His Holy Book. Humility is the fitting attitude for the mind which studies divine things; Adoration, the proper business of the heart; and oh! the peace and joy unspeakable which *they* experience, who are content in such a temper to feed upon the Word of Life. Consider such texts as the following: Job xxiii. 12; Psalm i. 2; lvi. 10; cxix. 72, 97, 103, 105, 140, 148, &c.

17 So all the generations from Abraham to David *are* fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon *are* fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto CHRIST *are* fourteen generations.

In the Book of Wisdom *(b)* it is said, "Thou hast ordered all things in measure, number, and weight."

Three fourteens are 42; which is declared *(c)* to be the number of the stations of the Israelites, on their way from Egypt into Canaan. Just so, there are found to be 42 resting places in this Genealogy, by which the Israel of God are conducted out of the bondage of the world into the promised land of the Gospel,—the glorious liberty of the kingdom of Christ. As a matter of fact, indeed, there were *more* than 42 stations, just as there were actually more than 42 steps in the Genealogy. *(d)* But the same inspiring SPIRIT which instructed the Author of the Book of Numbers to exhibit the stations as six times seven, guided the hand of the blessed Evangelist St. Matthew likewise to a similar result.

St. Matthew thus distinguishes *three* periods of time, from Abraham to CHRIST; as Moses had defined the limits of *two* earlier periods: *(e)* and these five embrace the whole interval comprehended by the Old Testament. A sixth and last period, the Age of the Gospel, extending on from the Advent of our LORD to the end of the world, may be considered to correspond with the Sixth Day of Creation, inasmuch as it presents us with the crowning work of Love, the Man, CHRIST JESUS, the Second Adam. There yet remains to be revealed that eternal Sabbath: *(f)* of which the rest of the seventh day was but a faint type or image: and the whole will indeed be "*finished*."

18 Now the birth of JESUS CHRIST was on this wise: When as His Mother Mary was espoused to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the HOLY GHOST.

The history of this mighty wonder is given at greater length in St. Luke's Gospel. *(g)* One Evangelist supplies what the other omits, in order to induce us to study all the four Gospels.

(y) St. Luke ii. 5.

(b) Wisdom xi. 20.

(c) Gen. v. and xi.

(z) St. Luke i. 32.

(c) Numbers xxxiii.

(f) Heb. iv. 9.

(a) St. Luke i. 69.

(d) See notes on verses 8 and 19.

(g) St. Luke i. 26—28.

That the Saviour should be born of "a Virgin espoused to a man," as St. Luke speaks, *(h)* was a part of the Divine contrivance. The secret of His birth was thereby effectually concealed. See the note on verse 16. Also on St. Luke i. 27.

19 Then Joseph her husband,

For, by the Jewish law, an "espoused" (or *betrothed*) woman was reckoned as a *wife*. Consider the language of Deut. xxii. 23, 24.

being a just *man*, and not willing to make her a public example, was minded to put her away privily.

From this, we gather two things. First, that Joseph was a person of amazing forbearance and tenderness. Secondly, that the Blessed Virgin had kept the miracle of the Incarnation a profound secret even from *him*. She left to God the care of completing his own designs, and carrying out the wonderful work He had begun.

Well would it be for us, if we also, after entire obedience, could be content to leave the issues of events in the hands of God! We act as if we could not trust Him in the commonest matters for a single hour.

20 But while he thought on these things, behold the Angel of the LORD appeared unto him in a dream, saying, Joseph, thou son of David, fear not to take unto thee Mary thy wife;

This was doubtless the Angel Gabriel, who had already conveyed wondrous tidings to Zacharias, and to the Blessed Virgin Mary. *(i)* Since the holy Angels take so great an interest in the concerns of men, as our Saviour JESUS CHRIST assures us that they do, *(k)* how must they have delighted in thus ministering to His chosen servants; and rejoiced in every thing that tended to prepare the way for the coming of His Gospel!

for that which is conceived in her is of the HOLY GHOST.

God ended his doubts by sending an angel to reveal to him the innocence of Mary, and the Divinity of her Son,—who derived His birth from Heaven, and was heir of all the world. "And in all our doubts," says a pious Bishop, "we shall have a resolution from Heaven, or some of its ministers, if we have recourse thither for a guide; and be not hasty in our discourses, or inconsiderate in our purposes, or rash in our judgment."

21 And she shall bring forth a Son, and thou shalt call His name JESUS: for He shall save His people from their sins.

Almost every name has a well-known meaning. The name JESUS means *Saviour*: that is why the Angel says, "*for He shall save His people.*"

"Jesus" is the Greek way of writing the Hebrew name Joshua. The famous typical personage who bore the latter name is therefore actually called "Jesus" in Acts vii. 45, and in Hebrews iv. 8. Other persons bore the name of Jesus besides our Lord: see, for example, Colossians iv. 11; but the name never *belonged of right*, to any one but *Him*.

Notice, here, the intimation afforded by the Angel that the promised Deliverer was to become the Head of a *spiritual* kingdom:—"He shall save His people—*from their sins.*" As for that expression, "*His people,*" consider how "He saith also in Osee, I will call them My people which were not My people," *(l)* for the name belongs to as many as have been redeemed to God by the Blood of the Lamb "out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation:" *(m)* and was not confined, as the Jews fondly supposed, to the natural descendants of Abraham. See the note on St. Matt. iii. 9.

It was long before the most enlightened among them were able to realize this great truth. Thus the Apostles are found inquiring of our Blessed Lord, shortly

(h) St. Luke i. 27.

(l) Rom. ix. 25.

(i) St. Luke i. 19, 26, 27.

(m) Rev. v. 9.

(k) See St. Luke xv. 10.

before His Ascension into Heaven, "Lord, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?"(a)

22 Now all this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the Lord by the Prophet,

Rather "spoken *by* the Lord, *through*," that is, "*by the mouth of*" "the prophet." Compare the language of Acts i. 16. So in ii. 15. More will be found on this subject in the note on St. Luke i. 70.

23 saying, Behold, a Virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a Son, and they shall call His name Emmanuel; which being interpreted, is, God with us.

Isaiah is the prophet here spoken of:(o) this is the first of the many ancient prophecies which St. Matthew notices as fulfilled in the History of our Blessed Lord. It had been pronounced about 750 years before, and yields to none, in its wondrous precision and clearness.

Emmanuel means "with us," *El* means "God." Compare Isaiah viii. 10, where this interpretation of the Hebrew name is found.

Not that our Saviour *received the name* "Emmanuel" from any one; but in Hebrew, "to be called" and "to be," are different ways of saying the same thing. CHRIST JESUS therefore, because He was "very God of very God," is said to have been "*called Emmanuel*," when He "*dwelt among us*," (as St. John writes, i. 14,) because He *was* really and truly, God *with us*.

Let us never forget His parting promise to His Apostles, the last words of St. Matthew's Gospel,—"*Lo I am with you* always, even unto the end of the world!" "If God be for us," asks St. Paul, "who can be against us?"(p)

24 Then Joseph being raised from sleep did as the angel of the Lord had bidden him, and took unto him his wife:

The Virgin Mary became the wife of Joseph, to whom she had already been espoused.(q) One reason why it was ordained that by a wedded wife the Eternal Son should be born into the world, has been already assigned in the note to ver. 16. But by this precaution on the part of the Most High we seem to be further taught that we may not rest content with purity of purpose and innocence of intention; but that we must also "provide things honest in the sight of all men;" leaving no room for scandal or suspicion, and throwing no unnecessary stumbling-block in the way of others. The most holy Virgin, as her title implies, remained a Virgin all her life. Our blessed Lord, the Only Begotten Son of the FATHER,(r)—was her first-born and her only Son. Yet, in respect of *that* mysterious Child-bearing also, did Mary remain a Virgin; so that she has been compared to the Bush which burned with fire—and yet was not consumed.(s)

25 And knew her not till she had brought forth her first-born Son:

Which does not, in the least degree, imply that she ever had *another*: but only, that she had never had a son before this. Every "first-born" was presented unto the Lord,—whence the special notice given to the first-born in the law of Moses, Exod. xiii. 2; xxii. 29; and xxxiv. 19; Numb. iii. 13; viii. 17; and xviii. 15; but this appellation was bestowed without any reference whatever to the children who might (or might not) happen to come after.

Concerning the expression "*till* she had brought forth," consider the following places of Scripture:—Gen. xxviii. 15; Deut. xxxiv. 6; 1 Sam. xv. 35; 2 Sam. vi. 23; Psalm cxii. 8, &c.; and take notice that in none of those places is it by any means implied that, at the period spoken of, the thing *did* happen which is spoken of as not having happened *until* then. See by all means, in a Bible with references, the marginal note against Daniel i. 21.

(a) Acts i. 3.

(q) See ver. 18, and note there.

(o) See Isaiah vii. 14.

(r) St. John i. 14, 18; iii. 16, 15.

(p) Rom. viii. 31.

(s) Exod. iii. 2.

and he called his name JESUS.

As Joseph had been commanded by the Angel in v. 21. The Blessed Virgin had received the same command before him.^(t) From the special interference of God in the bestowal of names on certain occasions, (as in Genesis xvi. 11; xvii. 5, 15, 19; xxxii. 28, and xxxv. 10; and St. Luke i. 13,) we learn that names ought not to be carelessly and thoughtlessly given, but that we should have a reason to assign for the name we bestow.

The dignity of the very *name* of God, may be inferred from that petition in our daily prayer,—“Hallowed be *Thy name*.” In many places of the Bible the Name of God stands for God Himself; as in Psalm xxi. 1, 7; Proverbs xviii. 10, &c.

PRAYERS.

GOD, which maketh us glad with the yearly remembrance of the birth of Thy only Son JESUS CHRIST, grant that as we joyfully receive Him for our Redeemer, so we may with sure confidence behold Him when He shall come to be our Judge; who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY SPIRIT, ever one GOD, world without end. Amen.

Collect for Christmas Day, A. D. 1549.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us Thy only-begotten Son to take our nature upon him, and as at this time to be born of a pure virgin; Grant that we being regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Thy HOLY SPIRIT; through the same our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same SPIRIT, ever one GOD, world without end. Amen.

(t) See St. Luke i. 31.

CHAPTER II.

1. *The Wise Men out of the East are directed to CHRIST by a Star.* 11. *They worship Him, and offer their presents.* 14. *Joseph fleeth into Egypt, with JESUS and His Mother.* 16. *Herod slayeth the children.* 20. *Himself dieth.* 23. *CHRIST is brought back again to Galilee into Nazareth.*

1 Now when JESUS was born in Bethlehem of Judæa in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came Wise Men from the east to Jerusalem.

These Persian sages are thought to have been of royal, as well as of priestly race; and in their persons may have been first fulfilled those glorious anticipations of the prophet Isaiah:—"Kings . . . shall bow down to Thee, with their face toward the earth, and lick up the dust of Thy feet." (a) "The Gentiles shall come to Thy light, and Kings to the brightness of Thy rising." (b) "Yea, all Kings shall bow down before Him." (c) See also Psalm lxxviii. 29; lxxii. 10.

2 Saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews? for we have seen His Star in the East, and are come to worship Him.

"King of the Jews!" a title which attended our Blessed Lord from the cradle to the grave. (d)

Notwithstanding the humbleness of our Redeemer's birth, it should not escape our notice that the blessed event was carolled by Angels on Earth, and proclaimed by a Star in Heaven. CHRIST was laid in a manger indeed; but Wise Men from the East did Him homage, and confessed that He was "King of the Jews." The finger of Prophecy pointed him out to the eye of Faith, from first to last, as the Messiah, the Saviour of the World.

Men are apt to overlook the glories by which the Son of God was attended, even in the lowest depth of His humiliation; simply because those glories were not of Earth, but of Heaven.

3 When Herod the King had heard *these things*, he was troubled, and all Jerusalem with him.

Herod was by birth an Idumæan, or Edomite; that is, a descendant of Esau. On this account, as well as because of his cruel and tyrannical conduct, he was far from popular with the Jewish people, (the descendants of Israel,) whom he governed. Well may tidings of one that was "born *King of the Jews*," have "troubled" Herod therefore; inflaming his jealousy, and arousing all his fears!

4 And when he had gathered all the chief Priests and Scribes of the people together, he demanded of them where CHRIST should be born.

Observe what important results followed at once from the Wise Men's visit to Jerusalem. The chief Priests and Scribes were made to bear witness to the clear

(a) Isaiah xlix. 23.
(c) Psalm lxxii. 11.

(b) Ib. lx. 3.
(d) See St. Matth. xxvii. 37, &c.

voice of Prophecy; and the attention of all who looked for redemption in Jerusalem(e) was called to the actual advent of CHRIST.

There were many holy men among the Jews who looked for His coming; as St. Andrew and St. John,(f) St. Philip(g) and others of the Apostles. Simeon is expressly said to have "waited for the consolation of Israel." (h) Joseph of Arimathea also "waited for the kingdom of God." (i)

5 And they said unto him, in Bethlehem of Judæa: for thus it is written by the Prophet,

The Jews knew very well (as we learn from St. John vii. 42) that CHRIST was to be born in Bethlehem Ephratah, or, as it was commonly called, Bethlehem of Judæa,—to distinguish it from the other village of the same name in the tribe of Zabulon.(k)

6 And thou Bethlehem, in the land of Juda, art not the least among the princes of Juda: for out of thee shall come a Governor, that shall rule My people Israel.

The chief Priests do not repeat the exact words of Micah v. 2, but they give the sense of the prophecy very fairly. It is because they cite that place of Scripture according to the interpretation then current among the Jews; and which is still preserved in their "Chaldee paraphrase."

7 Then Herod, when he had privily called the Wise Men, inquired of them diligently what time the Star appeared.

He sent for them in private, pretending to take a friendly interest in the tidings they brought, and hoping thereby the better to frustrate the Divine Will which he had just heard declared out of ancient prophecy. He had yet to learn that "the counsel of the LORD standeth for ever;" (l) that "with Him is wisdom and strength: He hath counsel and understanding;" (m) "He is in one mind, and who can turn Him?" (n) "Hath He said, and shall He not do it?"

8 And he sent them to Bethlehem, and said, Go and search diligently for the young Child; and when ye have found Him, bring me word again, that I may come and worship Him also.

Thus he sent them forth with lying words on his tongue, and murderous thoughts in his heart: but "the wicked is snared in the work of his own hands." (o) "There is no wisdom nor understanding nor counsel against the Lord." (p) "He disappointeth the devices of the crafty, so that their hands cannot perform their enterprise. He taketh the wise in their own craftiness." (q)

9 When they had heard the King, they departed; and lo, the Star, which they saw in the East, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young Child was.

The star which the Wise Men had seen when they were in the East, now appeared again; and went before them until, to their infinite joy and wonder, it rested and shone steadily above the dwelling of the Infant Saviour.

This is enough to show that what they beheld was not one of the stars of Heaven, but some bright heavenly body, which shone like a star, and appeared for the especial purpose of guiding these men, the first-fruits of the Gentiles, to CHRIST. The prophecy of Balaam(r) had prepared mankind for such an appearance at the birth of Him who afterwards styled Himself in the Book of Revelation, "the bright and morning Star." (s)

(e) St. Luke ii. 38.

(h) St. Luke ii. 25.

(l) Psalm xxxii. 11.

(o) Psalm ix. 16.

(r) Numb. xxiv. 17.

(f) St. John i. 35—41.

(i) St. Mark. xv. 43.

(m) Job xii. 13.

(p) Prov. xxi. 20.

(s) Numb. xxii. 16. Compare 2 Pet. i. 19.

(g) Ibid. i. 45.

(k) Joshua xix. 15.

(n) Ibid. xxiii. 13.

(q) Job v. 12, 13.

10 When they saw the Star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

GOD could have guided the Wise Men all the way from Persia to Bethlehem direct, had He seen fit; but His ways are not like man's ways. He brings about the ends of His Providence by an unexpected, and often unwelcome method; of which, however, when we look back, we can often discern the reason. For example, it may have been His Divine pleasure to try the faith of the Wise Men by making them repair to Jerusalem in the first instance; and certainly what they heard on reaching the city, must have been an abundant confirmation of their faith.^(t) God at last comforts His servants with the sight of the star again, for He is "the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort,"^(u) and never leaves without guidance those who are humbly walking in the way of His Commandments.

11 And when they were come into the house, they saw the young Child with Mary His Mother, and fell down, and worshipped Him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto Him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh.

Pious men have tried to discover the meaning of these three offerings: and that there is a meaning for every thing in Scripture is certain, though we cannot always find it out. The Gold is thought to have been an acknowledgment, as well as an emblem, of the Royalty of Christ: the Frankincense, of His Divinity: the Myrrh, of His sufferings and Death. For Gold was given to Kings,^(x) and Incense was offered with prayers,^(y) and Myrrh was used to embalm mortality.^(z)

Hence it is that *prayer* and *incense* came to be so often mentioned together.^(a) "Gold" is spoken of in connection with "Incense" in Isaiah lx. 6. For the use to which Myrrh was applied, see also St. Matthew xxvi. 7, 12, and the parallel places. The word there translated 'ointment,' is '*myrrh*' in the original.

12 And being warned of GOD in a dream that they should not return to Herod, they departed into their own country another way.

That is, they returned into Persia by a different way from that which had brought them to Jerusalem. Thus Herod will have pursued them in vain.

Holy men, in ancient days, feeding upon God's Word, and delighting in it, and seeing instruction in every part of it, found a lesson in what is here stated. It reminded them that the heart which has been once brought to the knowledge of CHRIST, and has bowed down in His presence, and has offered Him of its best, when it goes forth into the world again, will return to its "own country—another way."

13 And when they were departed, behold, the Angel of the LORD appeareth to Joseph in a dream, saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His Mother, and flee into Egypt, and be thou there until I bring thee word: for Herod will seek the young Child to destroy Him.

These last words remind us that God sees the yet unformed purpose in the heart. "Thou understandest my thoughts long before!" exclaims the Psalmist.^(b)

It is said in a certain place, "The Angel of the LORD tarrieth round about them that fear Him, and delivereth them."^(c) Holy Angels still guide the footsteps of the just, and minister to them, although unseen. Notice what is said in the Collect for 'St. Michael and all Angels.' "Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of Salvation?"^(d)

14 When he arose, he took the young Child and His Mother by night, and departed into Egypt.

(t) See also the note on verse 4.

(y) See Revelation viii. 3, 4.

(a) See Psalm cxlii. 2; St. Luke i. 10, 11; Rev. v. 8.

(c) Psalm xxxiv. 7.

(u) 2 Corinthians i. 3.

(z) See St. John xix. 39.

(d) Hebrews i. 14.

(x) See Psalm lxxii. 15.^o

(b) Psalm cxxxix. 1.

Thus then, from His earliest Infancy, was our Blessed Saviour exposed to hardship and suffering. Already might it have been said of Him, "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air have nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." (e)

Observe how silently, and how effectually God brings about His purposes. The Wise Men, moved by a dream, had already set out for the East. (f) Joseph, in the course of the same night probably, takes his journey in an opposite direction. Thus by day-break, there would remain in Bethlehem no trace of those against whom Herod will soon be "exceeding wroth."

15 And was there until the death of Herod: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken of the LORD by the Prophet,

On the expression,—“of the LORD by the prophet,” see the note on i. 22.

saying, Out of Egypt have I called My Son.

This is quoted from Hosea xi. 1,—at first sight, a marvellous application of that prophecy, truly! To understand it, we must bear in mind that *CHRIST* was the promised seed, (g) in whom God's promises to Abraham had their *real* fulfilment. He alone could properly be called God's *Son*: but it had been said of Abraham's descendants, when they were in Egypt, "Thus saith the LORD, *Israel is My son, even My first-born.*" (h) What was typically spoken of the children of Israel was therefore actually fulfilled in the person of JESUS CHRIST. As the infancy of that nation was cradled in Egypt, so was it with *His* infancy. In both cases, God sent a *Joseph* "to preserve life." (i) In both cases, "there arose up a new King;" (k) and lo, in both cases, "the LORD" called His Son "out of Egypt."

How, at every stage of our Blessed LORD's history, are we reminded that the Old Testament in its narratives, no less than in its prophecies, is full of *Him*! (Consider St. Luke xxiv. 27, 44, 45; St. John v. 46; Acts xxviii. 23.)

16 Then Herod, when he saw that he was mocked of the Wise Men, was exceeding wroth, and sent forth, and slew all the children that were in Bethlehem, and in all the coasts thereof, from two years old and under, according to the time which he had diligently inquired of the Wise Men.

The Infant Saviour has Infant Martyrs! Thus children are held up to our admiration from the very first,—in their deaths as in their lives, a pattern to older Christians. (l)

These Mothers of Bethlehem must have thought themselves supremely miserable; the most afflicted of God's creatures: but they little knew their blessedness! Their murdered Innocents evermore lead the van in 'the Noble Army of Martyrs:' and are honored by the Church's yearly Festival which bears their name. Now, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning, that we through patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope." (m)

It is worth observing that when Herod persecuted our LORD, we behold the remote descendant of Esau, the elder brother, persecuting the remote descendant of Jacob, the younger. (n) As once "Esau hated Jacob because of the blessing wherewith his father blessed him: and said, . . . Then will I slay my brother Jacob;" (o)—so was it now. The enmity of the brothers survived in the persons of their remote descendants. Consider the following texts: 1 Sam. xxi. 7; xxii. 9, 18, 19, 22; Obadiah 9—14; St. Mark vi. 17, 27; St. Luke xxiii. 11; Acts xii. 1—3, &c.

17 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the Prophet, saying,

(e) St. Matthew viii. 20.

(h) Exodus iv. 22.

(l) St. Matthew xviii. 2.

(f) St. Matthew ii. 12.

(i) Genesis xlv. 5.

(m) Romans xv. 4.

(o) Genesis xxvii. 41.

(g) Galatians iii. 16.

(k) Exodus i. 8.

(n) See note on verse 3.

18 In Rama there was a voice heard, lamentation, and weeping, and great mourning, Rachel weeping *for* her children, and would not be comforted, because they are not.

These words are found in Jeremiah xxxi. 15. The prophecy received an immediate fulfilment when the descendants of Rachel, who were being carried away captive to Babylon, were led past her tomb. (*p*) She whom Jacob had buried "in the way to Ephrath, which is Bethlehem," (*q*) was then, by a beautiful poetical figure, said to weep passionately for her offspring, because she beheld them taken from her. The bereaved Mother sends up a cry of agony from the very chamber of Death!

But this prophecy was far more strikingly fulfilled in the days of the Gospel, when the children of the same Mother were cut off, as it seemed, without any hope of return.

Yet, consider the message of the Prophet; (*r*) and take note in what a far higher sense his words were fulfilled in the persons of the Holy Innocents.

19, 20 But when Herod was dead, behold, an Angel of the LORD appeareth in a dream to Joseph in Egypt. Saying, Arise, and take the young Child and His Mother, and go into the land of Israel: they are dead which sought the young Child's life.

You will find that these last words were also spoken to Moses, who was a type of CHRIST. (*s*) Holy Scripture often reminds us, in this manner, of types and figures; thus guiding us by the hand, as it were, to much of its hidden teaching. Compare for example Genesis xxviii. 12, with St. John i. 52; and see the note on St. Matthew i. 1, and ii. 4.

During the last few weeks of Herod's life, he had a horrible disorder, of which he died in a dreadful manner, about the month of March, four years before the common account called Anno Domini, i. e. B. C. 4; at which time our Blessed SAVIOUR may have been about a half year old.

21 And he arose, and took the young Child and His Mother, and came into the land of Israel.

Thus, at a Passover time, (for it was just before a Passover that Herod died,) did *He* came up out of Egypt, of whom Israel was a type. (*t*)

Now are we reminded by this complicated history, of that earlier page of the Bible which records God's no less marvellous dealings with His typical son, the children of Israel! Surely, no strangeness in the Divine method with respect to ourselves, should ever stagger us, after what Revelation has recorded concerning the histories of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, of Joseph and of David, even of the Incarnate Son.

22 But when he heard that Archelaus did reign in Judæa in the room of his father Herod, he was afraid to go thither: notwithstanding, being warned of GOD in a dream, he turned aside into the parts of Galilee:

Judæa became the scene of tumults after the death of Herod: every part of the country was infested by lawless bands of armed men. Joseph therefore trembled for the Holy Child. But the Angel who had guided him into Egypt, and brought him tidings of Herod's death, now warns him in which direction to bend his footsteps.

All these things happened for our example. "I will never leave *thee* nor forsake *thee*," says GOD ALMIGHTY. He has never yet forsaken those who did not first forsake Him.

For a few words concerning Archelaus, see the last note on St. Luke iii. 1, 2.

(*p*) Jeremiah xl. 1

(*q*) Genesis xxxv. 19.

(*r*) Jeremiah xxxi. 16, 17.

(*s*) Exodus iv. 19.

(*t*) Deuteronomy xvi. 1.

23 And he came and dwelt in a city called Nazareth: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophets, He shall be called a Nazarene.

No one particular place of Scripture is here referred to. This was spoken by "*the Prophets.*"

The Hebrew word *Neser* means "a branch;" and from this word, the name of the town called Nazareth, (which should not be written with a z,) is derived. The HOLY SPIRIT therefore here informs us, that when our LORD went to dwell at Nazareth, and was called a *Nazarene*, all those prophecies found fulfilment which spoke of Him as THE BRANCH. For example, "There shall come forth a rod out of the stem of Jesse, and a BRANCH shall grow out of his root."(*l*) Again, "Behold the man whose name is the BRANCH."(*u*) See also Zech. iii. 8; and Jeremiah xxiii. 5; and xxxiii. 15.

A *Nazarite* and a *Nazarene* are wholly different. John Baptist was a *Nazarite*:(*x*) which our LORD expressly says that He Himself was not.(*y*)

This may seem a strange explanation of the text, but it is the only *true* explanation of it. How wonderful then, is the mind of the *SPIRIT*, and in what unexpected ways is GOD found to fulfill his words! "How unsearchable are His judgments, and His ways past finding out."(*z*)

THE PRAYERS.

O GOD, who by the leading of a Star didst manifest Thy Only-Begotten SON to the Gentiles; mercifully grant that we which know Thee now by faith, may after this life have the fruition of Thy glorious Godhead, through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who out of the mouths of babes and sucklings hast ordained strength, and madest Infants to glorify Thee by their deaths; mortify and kill all vices in us, and so strengthen us by Thy grace, that by the innocency of our lives, and constancy of our faith, even unto death, we may glorify Thy holy Name; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

(*l*) Isaiah xi. 1.

(*u*) Zechariah vi. 12.

(*y*) St. Matthew xi. 19.

(*x*) See St. Matth. iii. 4.

(*z*) Romans xi. 33.

CHAPTER III.

1 *John preacheth: his office: life, and baptism.* 7 *He reprehendeth the Pharisees, 13 and baptizeth CHRIST in Jordan.*

1 IN those days came John the Baptist, preaching in the wilderness of Judea,

The time here spoken of was about thirty years after the birth of CHRIST. John the Baptist, whose miraculous birth St. Luke describes, *(a)* was then sent to prepare the SAVIOUR'S way.

Consider how this man,—“a Prophet, yea and more than a Prophet;” *(b)* nay, consider how CHRIST Himself, “the latchet of whose shoes” the Forerunner was “not worthy to stoop down and unloose;” *(c)*—appeared not in public, nor commenced His Ministry, till He “began to be about thirty years of age.” *(d)* Surely, the consideration of these examples should act as a check and curb; inspire modesty and distrust, in those who are called to the Ministry of CHRIST'S Church; even where there may be no lack of ability and true piety! “Good fruit may be plucked too green; which, let alone awhile to ripen, would prove much more pleasant and profitable.”

Archbishop Leighton, (the author of the foregoing remark,) points out that, in the case of our Incarnate LORD and His Forerunner,—(if it be lawful thus to name the two together,)—their long lying hid, is so much the more remarkable, inasmuch as, besides their singular fitness for appearing much sooner, they had so short a time allotted for their course: the Forerunner, about one year; and our LORD JESUS CHRIST Himself, but about three years and a half.

2 and saying, Repent ye: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

It appears from St. Matthew iv. 17, that this was the subject of our LORD'S preaching also. The Forerunner's doctrine, (it has been said,) was to the sermons of JESUS, as a preface to a discourse; and his Baptism, was to the discipline of the Kingdom, as the Vigil to a Holiday,—of the same kind, in a less degree.

The same as this of St. John Baptist, and of our SAVIOUR, was the message of the Twelve Apostles likewise. *(e)*—It is only by Repentance that we can become fit to receive the message of the Kingdom. Self-denial is necessary to prepare us to receive the Grace of God.

For this is He that was spoken of by the prophet Esaias, saying, The voice of one crying in the wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.

In such language had the prophet Isaiah, more than 700 years before, foretold the Baptist's office. *(f)* So true is that saying of St. James,—“Known unto God are all His works from the beginning of the world!” *(g)*

(a) i. 5 to 25, and 57 to 80.
(d) St. Luke iii. 23.
(g) Acts xv. 18.

(b) St. Matthew xi. 9.
(c) St. Matthew x. 7.

(e) St. Mark i. 7.
(f) Isaiah xl. 3.

"This suits well with the foregoing sum of the Baptist's preaching, and is in effect the same with it. '*Repent*,' is,—'Prepare the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.' Repentance levels the heart to God; makes it a plain for CHRIST to walk in; casts down the Mountains of Pride; and raises the soul from base, low, earthly ways and affections; smooths the rugged passions, and straightens the crooked deceit of the heart; makes it sincere and straight, both towards God and Man. And this is our business,—to be dealing with our hearts, leveling, smoothing, straightening them for our LORD; that He may take delight to dwell and walk in them, and refresh them with His presence. And certainly, the more holy diligence is used in suiting the heart to His holy will, the more of His sweet presence shall we enjoy." So far, pious Leighton.

4 And the same John had his raiment of camel's hair, and a leathern girdle about his loins; and his meat was locusts and wild honey.

By this description of the Baptist's attire, we are reminded that *he* was the person whom the prophet Malachi foretold, iv. 5, 6; for Elijah is said to have worn the self-same dress. See 2 Kings i. 8:—where it is described in the self-same words: and read the note on St. Matthew ii. 20.

The Old Testament, because it ends with that prophecy concerning John the Baptist, has been said *to expire with the Gospel on its lips*.

In his hard fare, and severe mode of living, (*h*) the Baptist is a rebuke to the luxurious and self-indulgent. He tasted neither wine nor strong drink; (*i*) but was a Nazarite from his mother's womb. (*k*) God fed him with locusts; concerning which, see Leviticus xi. 22: and satisfied him with "honey out of the stony rock," as it is said in Psalm lxxxi. 16. His dwelling-place was the Wilderness; (*l*) which means not a region where none abide: but a retired, and less peopled place. And this is "for the example of all the messengers of God; to live, as much as may be, in their condition and station, disengaged from the world: not following the vain delights and ways of it; not bathing in the solaces and pleasures of earth, and entangling themselves in the cares of it: but sober, and modest, and mortified in their way of living; making it their main business not to please the flesh; but to do service to their LORD, to walk in His ways; and prepare His way for Him in the hearts of His people." The words are, once more, Leighton's.

5, 6 Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region round about Jordan. And were baptized of him in Jordan, confessing their sins.

How passing wonderful must have been the cause which could produce such a result as this!—a result which is yet indicated, rather than described, by the Evangelist. Holy Scripture, by such brief statements, seems often to force us, as it were, to reflect on the majesty of all that it leaves unsaid. Consider St. Matthew xxvii. 54; xxviii. 4; St. Mark ix. 15; St. Luke ii. 13, 14 (where see the note); St. John xviii. 6, &c. &c. &c.

We must put together all the scattered hints we possess:—the miraculous birth, and the name bestowed by an Angel's lips; (*m*) of which events some traditional knowledge may have got spread abroad: the thirty long years of hardship and privation, silence and seclusion from the world, suddenly brought to an end: the austere life, and stern aspect: the reputation of extraordinary personal sanctity: the summons to repentance and amendment of life; of which, water-Baptism was the well-known type or emblem: the soul-stirring Voice, which all men might now hear crying in the wilderness: the rough garb, which recalled Elijah the prophet,—and the mortified exterior, which bespoke contempt of the world, its pomps, and its pleasures: the claim to occupy a place in the page of unfulfilled prophecy:—all this, joined to the national belief that Messiah was indeed shortly about to appear, and the Preacher's plain avowal that his own office was but to prepare Messiah's way before Him;—all this, I say, may help us, in part, to understand why the wonderful results here described, should have followed, so speedily, on the Baptist's preaching.

(*h*) See St. Matthew xi. 18.

(*l*) St. Luke i. 80.

(*i*) St. Luke i. 15.

(*m*) See the notes on St. Luke i. 13.

(*k*) Numbers vi. 2, 3.

7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

These were stern words to address to the Pharisees, who were "the most straightest sect" of the Jewish religion, as St. Paul declares in Acts xxvi. 5. But our SAVIOUR employed terms of even greater severity towards them; see St. Matthew xxiii. 13—33. We are thereby reminded that "the LORD seeth not as man seeth; for man looketh on the outward appearance, but the LORD looketh on the heart." (n)

It is not to be doubted that among their number were *some* sincere persons; but, as a body, they must have been proud, uncharitable, and self-righteous; of a character, wholly unlike that which God approves. See St. Matthew v. 3—10; and the notes on St. Luke iii. 7.

8 Bring forth fruits therefore meet for repentance:

John's Baptism was a "Baptism of Repentance." (o) He therefore warns these men, who sought the blessing of his Baptism, that they must prove their repentance *sincere* by leading a *more holy life*. He exhorts them to make their conduct answer to their profession.

9 and think not to say within yourselves, We have Abraham to our father: for I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham.

The Jews relied on their descent from Abraham, for favour and acceptance with God. (p) It was only the more spiritually minded among them who understood that "Abraham's children" were they who *did the works* of Abraham; (q) and that "he is a Jew which is one *inwardly*." (r) "For," as St. Paul explained to the nation, "they are not all Israel, which are of Israel;" (s) but, "the Israel of God" (t) are "such as are of a clean heart." (u) "Neither, because they are the seed of Abraham, are they all children;" (x) but, as the same Apostle teaches in another place, "they which are of Faith, the same are the children of Abraham." (y)

The Baptist, who was preaching in the rocky wilderness of the Jordan, reminds his hearers, that "of these stones, God could create for Himself a people at His will; and the HOLY SPIRIT, by the Baptist's preaching, solemnly warns us also not to rely on our privileges as a Church and Nation; but to *bring forth fruits worthy of our high calling*. The heart is for ever prone thus to lean on external advantages. How singular a parallel is presented by the Christian Church, as it is now in the world, with the Jewish Church in the days of the Son of Man! See the second note on St. Luke iii. 8.

10 And now also the axe is laid unto the root of the trees: therefore every tree which bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

A woodman, before he begins to fell a tree, lays the sharp edge of his axe to the place where he means to aim his first blow; he gives warning, as it were, that he is about to strike. Just such a merciful warning did the Baptist's preaching convey to each of those who heard him. "Now," said he, "the axe is laid." Our Blessed LORD uses the same figure. See vii. 19; and St. Luke xiii. 6—9.

11 I indeed baptize you with water unto repentance: but He that cometh after me is mightier than I, Whose shoes I am not worthy to bear: He shall baptize you with the HOLY GHOST, and with fire:

(n) 1 Samuel xvi. 7.

(p) See St. John viii. 33, 39.

(q) Romans ix. 6.

(r) Romans ix. 7.

(o) Verse 11; see also Acts xiii. 24.

(q) St. John viii. 39.

(r) Galatians vi. 16.

(y) Galatians iii. 7, 9, 29.

(s) Romans ii. 28, 29.

(t) Psalm lxxiii. 1.

Alluding chiefly (z) to what took place on the day of Pentecost, see Acts ii. 3 and 4. But every Christian, at his Baptism, is "born of water *and of the Spirit*;" (a) and in this, lay the great difference between John's Baptism and Christian Baptism. John's Baptism did not convey the gift of the HOLY GHOST: CHRIST's Baptism *did*. See the note on St. Luke iii. 16.

Concerning the general meaning and intention of John's Baptism, see the second note on St. Mark i. 5. Next, observe how careful is the Forerunner found, on all occasions, to abase himself and to magnify his Master! Lastly, compare the opposite meanings of the concluding word in verses 11 and 12; and consider that "we must be either baptized in *this* fire, or burned in *that*!"

12 Whose fan *is* in His hand, and He will thoroughly purge His floor,

That is,—this is a sifting and a trying time. The unfruitful shall now be taken away; cut down and given to destruction. Now also shall light hearts, and vain minds be winnowed out from among the just, and become as fuel for the fire. "Where the Gospel comes in greatest power, *there* is the most certain and the saddest weight of judgment on the unbelieving and impenitent, the formal and fruitless."

Consider, in connection with this intimation of the searching character of our LORD's coming, the following places of Scripture:—Zechariah xiii. 9; Malachi iii. 2 and 3; 1 Corinthians iii. 13; St. Luke ii. 35. And notice, that the same quality which is ascribed to the personal Advent of CHRIST, is ascribed also to His Written Word:—Jeremiah xxiii. 29; Hebrews iv. 12; St. John xii. 48. Compare 1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25.

and gather His wheat into the garner; but He will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

The Wheat, and the Chaff; the Good, and the Wicked; the Heavenly Garner, and the Fire unquenchable: no mention is any where made of a *third* class of persons; no promise is any where found of a *third* place!

How mercifully has the Holy Spirit of God ordained that the commonest sights shall remind us of the things which concern our peace! Henceforth, Fan, Flail, and Threshing-floor, become full of Christian teaching. Not, however, that there is any thing *new* in these images, as found in the pages of the New Testament. The Eternal Sox, by His Spirit, had taught His Servants, in every age, to discern the same solemn lessons in the same familiar objects. See Isaiah xli. 15, 16; Jeremiah li. 33; Job xxi. 18; Psalm i. 4, and xxxv. 5; Isaiah xvii. 13, and xxix. 5; Hosea xiii. 3; also Malachi iv. 1.

13 Then cometh JESUS from Galilee to Jordan unto John, to be baptized of him.

CHRIST comes to His servant, John the Baptist. The greater comes meekly to the less. Our LORD is a pattern to us in all things. See the note on St. Luke i. 44.

In St. Mark's Gospel (b) we are told that it was *from Nazareth* of Galilee, where He had been brought up, that our LORD came.

14 But John forbad Him saying, I have need to be baptized of Thee, and comest Thou to me?

John sought to prevent our LORD, and spake the words here recorded, because he was well aware of the perfect holiness of our SAVIOUR's character; not because he yet knew for certain that his mighty Kinsman was the Son of God. He did not know *that* until *after* the Baptism, as we are told in another place. (c)

(z) See Acts i. 5.

(a) 1 John iii. 5.

(b) i. 9.

(c) St. John i. 31 and 33.

15 And JESUS answering said unto him, Suffer *it to be so* now; for thus it becometh us to fulfill all righteousness.

Our SAVIOUR came to fulfill the Law, as He Himself said, *(d)* and therefore He conformed Himself to all its requirements: setting us an example, and teaching us the duty of conformity and obedience. It was for our sake alone that He was baptized in the river Jordan,—thereby for ever consecrating the nature of water to the mystical washing away of sin. He did not require “the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of sins,” because He (and He *alone*) was without sin: yet, inasmuch as He had taken our nature upon Him, it was fitting that He should perfectly accomplish in His own person all that must afterwards be fulfilled in the person of each of His members. Hence it is that we shall behold Him, in the next chapter, tempted; afterwards, hungering and thirsting; then, taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses; *(e)* lastly, submitting Himself to Death. Hence it was that He descended into Hell, rose again from the dead, and ascended into Heaven. It was for our sakes that *He* did all these things Who had clothed Himself with our common Human Nature.

Even the renewed unction of the HOLY GHOST here recorded, was for our sakes likewise; for since our LORD was “conceived by the HOLY GHOST,” He had been sanctified thereby since the time of His Incarnation. But it was to teach us that in Holy Baptism there must needs be the gift of the HOLY SPIRIT.

The few words here spoken, are the only recorded words addressed by “the Bridegroom” to His “Friend.” We know that the sound of that blessed voice, filled the Forerunner’s heart with joy unspeakable. See St. John iii. 29.

Then he suffered Him.

Our Blessed LORD’s reply satisfied the scruples of the Baptist. To ourselves,—what page of Holy Writ does not seem to require an interpreter?

He,—“the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world;” *(f)* He,—the “Fountain opened for sin and for uncleanness,” *(g)*—here humbles Himself to be baptized. On this, the pious writer already quoted, exclaims,—“Oh, that we who are baptized, had more of His likeness in this humble reverence for Divine ordinances; looking on them as *His*, in every warranted hand! What though he that teaches be less knowing and less spiritual than thou that hearest? one, that might rather learn of *thee*? Yet, the appointment of God obliges thee to attend to his ministry as humbly, and with as much regard, as if he were an Angel.”

16 And JESUS, when He was baptized, went up straightway out of the water: and, lo, the heavens were opened unto Him, and He saw the SPIRIT of GOD descending like a dove, and lighting upon Him:

Such was the sign which had been promised to John, whereby he should know the Messiah. *(h)* JESUS of Nazareth was thus declared to be the CHRIST, and pointed out to the world as by the finger of God. *(i)*

The HOLY SPIRIT may have chosen to appear in the shape of a dove, not only because that bird is the emblem of meekness, gentleness, innocence, *(k)* attributes which were so conspicuous in our Divine Master; *(l)* qualities which, as we are hereby reminded, ought ever to distinguish the spiritual man also; *(m)* but further, in order to recall the blessed office which the same Bird discharged in the days of Noah. *(n)* It was a Dove which then, as now, brought to him who represented the Human Race, the comfortable pledge of restored mercies; announced that God was reconciled to a guilty World; and proclaimed that “Old things had passed away, behold all things were become new.” Noah’s Ark was the type of the Christian Church (as we read in the Baptismal Service), and that Church was as yet in CHRIST.

(d) St. Matthew v. 17.

(e) St. Matthew viii. 17.

(f) St. John i. 29.

(g) Zechariah xiii. 1.

(h) See St. John i. 33.

(i) Compare St. Matthew xii. 28, and St. Luke xi. 20.

(k) St. Matthew x. 16.

(l) Isaiah xlii. 1–3; lvi. 1; St. Matthew xi. 29.

(m) 1 Thessalonians ii. 7; 2 Timothy ii. 24, 25; Titus iii. 2; St. James iii. 17; 2 Corinthians xiii. 11; Romans xii. 18, &c.

(n) Genesis viii. 11. Consider 1 Peter iii. 20, 21.

17 And lo a voice from Heaven, saying, This is My beloved Son, in Whom I am well pleased.

This visible display of Divine Power and Love is recorded to have occurred at our SAVIOUR'S Baptism, in order to teach us what happens, although unseen, at ours. The HOLY SPIRIT then descends, and takes up His abode with us. By adoption, we then become "children of God."

In the former verse, mention was made of God the HOLY GHOST. Here, God the FATHER proclaims the Eternal and Beloved SON. The chapter which contains this glorious manifestation of the ever Blessed TRINITY is accordingly appointed to be the Second Lesson on Trinity Sunday.

How marvelously do the Old and New Testament correspond! There had been a manifestation resembling the present, "In the beginning." "The SPIRIT of God moved upon the face of the waters; and God said, Let there be Light, and there was Light!" The first chapter of Genesis is, accordingly, another of the proper Lessons for Trinity Sunday.

But our SAVIOUR, "by Whom all things were made," often declared of Himself, "I am the Light of the world;" "the *true Light*, which lighteneth every man;" and this was His Epiphany or Manifestation to the world. Here was a fresh "Beginning," therefore; and "the SPIRIT of God" is found to have once more "moved upon the face of the waters."^(o)

THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, by whose Providence Thy Servant John Baptist was wonderfully born, and sent to prepare the way of Thy SON our SAVIOUR, by preaching of Repentance; make us so to follow his doctrine and holy life, that we may truly repent according to his preaching; and after his example constantly speak the Truth, boldly rebuke Vice, and patiently suffer for the Truth's sake; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

(o) Genesis i. 2.

CHAPTER IV.

1 CHRIST *fasteth, and is tempted.* 11 *The angels minister unto Him.* 13 *He dwelleth in Capernaum,* 17 *beginneth to preach,* 18 *calleth Peter, and Andrew,* 21 *James, and John,* 23 *and healeth all the diseased.*

THE Temptation of our Blessed Lord, with which the fourth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel commences, is an event of such unusual interest and of such overwhelming importance; so astonishing in its details, and so tremendous in its consequences; that the reader's attention must be invited to a few introductory remarks, in order that he may study with more delight and profit what is to follow.

It must be borne in mind, then, that the gracious object with which our Saviour CHRIST came into the World was to recover for the Human Race, in His own person, that which it had lost in the persons of our first parents, at the Fall. For this purpose, He "was *made flesh*, and dwelt among us;" (a) Hence, JESUS CHRIST is called "the second Adam,"—being the beginning of a new Creation. He came to restore our ruined Nature; and, by undoing the ancient curse, to win back for mankind an entrance into Paradise. (b) The first step towards this blessed end was the effectual *resistance* of him to whose seductions Adam had *yielded*,—the conquest of Satan, who before had been conqueror. (c) For, "as by one man Sin entered into the world, and Death by Sin . . . even so" was it ordained that "by the Righteousness of One, the free gift should come upon all men unto Justification of life;" that "as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so by the obedience of One should many be made righteous." (d) These remarks will sufficiently explain how it happens that the Temptation of CHRIST by Satan, stands on the very threshold of the Gospel History.

The first hint contained in the Old Testament Scriptures of what was to follow, is found in Genesis iii. 15,—where it is darkly prophesied that the Seed of the Woman,—(that is, some one mysteriously born of one of Eve's descendants, without a human Father,) should "bruise the Serpent's head." As time went on, that ancient prophecy grew more and more explicit; as a reference to Isaiah vii. 14, will show. This Deliverer of the Human Race, promised at first generally to our first Parents,—then, limited to the first descendants of Abraham, (e)—and afterwards restricted to the posterity of Judah; was at last confirmed with an oath to the line of David the King. (f)

Meanwhile, the prophet Isaiah actually *described* the wondrous Being who was to prove the Saviour of Israel. (g) Daniel fixed the *time* of His coming, by defining the interval "unto the Messiah, the Prince." (h) Each succeeding prophet, with astonishing minuteness, added some touches to the picture:—one, mentioning the place of His Nativity, (i)—another, foreseeing the number of pieces of silver for which He should be sold; (k)—another, discerning the Forerunner, who should come to prepare His way: (l) until the fullness of time arrived, and mankind became aware that "the Desire of all nations" must be very nigh,—even at the doors.

Let it be observed, that while the whole Human Race was in expectation of such a Deliverer, the Devil,—that old Serpent, (m)—cannot be supposed to have been

(a) St. John i. 14, on which place see the note. (b) St. Luke xxiii. 43, and the note there.
 (c) See 1 St. John iii. 8. (d) Rom. v. 12, 18, 19. (e) Gen. xxii. 18.
 (f) 2 Sam. vii. 12; Ps. cxxxvii. 11. (g) 1s. li. (h) Daniel ix. 25.
 (i) Micah v. 2. (k) Zech. xi. 12, 13. (l) Malachi iii. 1, iv. 5, 6. (m) Rev. xii. 9.

unconscious of men's hopes; still less, to have been unconcerned in their frustration. He had acquired by usurpation, a wonderful dominion over the bodies, as well as the souls of men,—as many a passage in the Gospel proves. Consider St. Luke xiii. 16,—the daughter of Abraham, *whom Satan had bound* for eighteen years: and Acts x. 38,—where St. Peter describes our Lord as healing all those who were *tyrannized over by the Devil*. Consider also Acts xxvi. 18. Satan had been like “a strong man armed,” “keeping his goods in peace,” for 4000 years. He had every thing to fear from the coming of “one stronger than he!”⁽ⁿ⁾ And such an One the voice from Heaven, recorded in the last verse of the former chapter, had proclaimed. With mingled surprise and consternation, therefore, at the announcement that the Son of God stood on the banks of the Jordan, we may presume him to have hastened thither at once: to have followed the Holy Object of his fear and hate to the Wilderness; and there to have availed himself of the hour of faintness and extremity, to commence his most fierce assault. See the note on St. Luke iv. 2.

There must have been *surprise*, as well as consternation, on the part of the Enemy of Mankind. The Messiah had been promised to the Royal House of David:^(o) but the Royalty had long since departed from Judah. The Messiah was to have been born in Bethlehem:^(p) but CHRIST had come to His baptism from Nazareth,^(q) having passed almost the whole of His previous life in that city.^(r) Above all, a *Virgin* was to have been His Mother:^(s) but Mary was married,^(t) our Lord “being (as was supposed) the Son of Joseph.”^(u) The Arch-Fiend must therefore have been as confounded as he was terrified by the announcement which now brought him into the presence of the Son of Man; and he came not by deputy, but in person, in order that he might the better make trial of His pretensions, and ascertain the strength of Him with whom he had to do.

In what follows, therefore, we are permitted to witness the most wonderful scene, perhaps, in the whole Book of God's Revelation:—one, which nothing *but* a Revelation from Him could have discovered to us. The Eternal Son, encompassed with all the infirmity of our Nature, is about to encounter face to face the Enemy of our Salvation. Guided therefore by the HOLY SPIRIT, He withdraws into the Wilderness, for the special purpose of being tempted.

1 Then was JESUS led up of the Spirit

“Then,”—that is immediately after His Baptism:^(r) as if to remind us that this Life is from the very first a scene of Trial; and also to teach us that, until strength has been given in the Blessed Sacrament of Baptism, the Christian soldier is not fit to encounter the seductions of the Devil, the World, and the Flesh.—See the notes on the last half of St. Mark i. 12; also the first note on the fourth chapter of St. Luke.

“Then,”—that is, immediately before He entered on His public Ministry. “Thus look to be assailed, when thou art about to engage in any special service. Each, according to his place, will find this. When he is upon some purpose of honoring God in any particular undertaking or course, and is nearest the performance, then shall the strength of Hell be mustered up against him.”

into the wilderness, to be tempted of the Devil.

“Into the wilderness—to be tempted.” There are Temptations therefore in solitude and in the waste. Nay, we learn from this place that solitude is *the fittest scene* for Temptation. Yet men sometimes talk as if in crowded cities alone Temptations abounded.

2 And when He had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was afterward an hungered.

The Almighty Hand, which had till then sustained Him,—as It had before sustained Moses, on three several occasions,^(x) and Elijah, on one,^(y)—was then sen-

(n) St. Luke xi. 21, 22.

(o) See the references above, in note f.

(p) Micah v. 2.

(q) St. Mark i. 9.

(r) St. Matt. ii. 23.

(s) Isaiah vii. 14.

(t) St. Matt. i. 24.

(u) St. Luke iii. 23.

(x) Compare St. Mark i. 12, and St. Luke iv. 1.

(y) Deuteronomy ix. 9 and 18; also x. 1 and 10, compared with Exodus xxxiv. i. and 28.

(y) 1 Kings xix. 8.

sibly withdrawn: and the SON of GOD, who had assumed the reality of our human Nature, "hungered." This was necessary: because, not by GOD *as* GOD, but by "*The Man CHRIST JESUS,*"(z) must Satan be overcome.

3 And when the Tempter came to Him,

Having probably first assumed the appearance of "an Angel of Light,"(a) Observe the malice of Satan,—reserving his most vigorous onset for the hour of fainting, and nature's greatest need!

We shall find that his first Temptation is directed against *carnal appetite*: a circumstance which may convince us of the quarter in which our Nature is most easily, as well as most successfully, assailed. "The Lust of the flesh" is deemed the readiest avenue of Temptation,—in the case of the second, as in the case of the first, Adam.

he said, If Thou be the SON of GOD, command that these stones be made bread.

By these words, the Arch-Fiend seeks to inspire the same distrust in GOD,—the same impatient requiring of food,(b)—which the typical Israel displayed during their forty years of trial: when, as it is said, "Last came upon them in the wilderness, and they tempted GOD in the desert."(c)

The Tempter says,—If Thou be, in truth, what the Voice from Heaven lately proclaimed Thee to be,—namely, the promised SON of GOD and the Anointed Deliverer: make proof of Thy Divine character by a display of Thy Almighty power. GOD humbles Thee in the wilderness,—as He "humbled" the people who foreshadowed Thee of old: GOD suffers Thee to hunger now, as He "suffered" them.(d) And yet, He "rained down manna upon them for to eat, and gave them food from heaven. . . . He rained flesh upon them as thick as dust. . . . So they did eat and were well filled."(e) Thou art faint, and nigh unto death. Why shouldst Thou, more than they, be disappointed of Thy lust?(f) If Thou be the SON of GOD, command that these stones be made bread!

There seems nothing monstrous in this proposal. It might be thought also that it could not have been unlawful in Him who giveth food to all flesh:—who, at Cana, commanded the water to be made wine;—and who, on the Eastern shores of the Lake, supplied the necessities of the five, and of the four thousand:—by a similar exercise of Divine power, to relieve Himself. But the sinfulness of the act, in the present instance, would have consisted in compliance with Satan's suggestion. And how unlike would have been the circumstances,—how different would have been the object and the consequence,—of our LORD's compliance! A miracle performed, not in public, but in utter privacy: not intended for convincing men, but for gratifying the great Enemy of mankind: not calculated to create in others confidence in GOD, by supplying support which (in the words of a great writer) "might prove the symbol of better nourishment than Earth could give;" but ending, where it began,—in self. The effect of such compliance on the part of our LORD, would have been only "to suspend and terminate an extraordinary act of devotion, tending to GOD's glory, and His own perfection."

4 But He answered and said, It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of GOD.

Our LORD's reply might have simply been, that compliance was *not His Divine pleasure*. Far different, however, was His reply. He accepts (and thereby discovers to us) the Tempter's allusion to the History of GOD's chosen people: but calmly appeals, at the same time, to the deep and divine lesson which the great Lawgiver (in Deut. viii. 3) had himself drawn from the occasion when "Man did eat Angels' food."(g) The object of that supernatural supply, whereby the Israelites were fed so long, had been,—to train them to confidence in GOD as their sole support and satisfying portion;—to rebuke their sensual spirit;—and to furnish a

(z) 1 Tim. ii. 5.

(a) 2 Cor. xi. 14.

(b) Ps. lxxviii. 19.

(c) Ps. cvi. 14.

(d) Deut. viii. 3.

(e) Ps. lxxviii. 25—30.

(f) Ps. lxxviii. 30.

(g) Ps. lxxviii. 25.

pledge of the security of all God's gracious promises,—an earnest of the blessings which were yet in store, and which awaited them when they should reach their typical Land of Rest. So that, if we may venture to represent so lofty a matter in language of our own, the reply of the Holy One amounted to a declaration that He had meat to eat which the Tempter knew not of,—even the Heavenly aid which did not forsake Him, when all earthly means of sustenance had been withdrawn. His pure mind and will, needed not, like the grosser minds of the Hebrew Fathers, a sign from Heaven. For *His* spiritual support no sensible token was necessary: but, (as Himself said on another occasion), His meat was to do the Father's will, and to finish His work.^(h)

See more on this subject, in the note to St. Luke iv. 4.

5 Then the Devil taketh Him up into the Holy City, and setteth Him on a pinnacle of the Temple,

The *manner* of this mysterious proceeding, is not revealed; but left for the exercise of a reverent curiosity. It seems most likely that a supernatural agency was employed in the second, as in the third Temptation; and that our Lord permitted Himself to be borne by the Adversary through the air. See the note on ver. 8.

Here, then, the scene of conflict is changed. It is no longer the Wilderness, but Jerusalem; and Jerusalem retains its name of "The Holy City," though its inhabitants are no longer holy. The appellation is found in Isaiah xlviii. 2, and Daniel ix. 24. It recurs in St. Matthew xxvii. 53.

The "*pinnacle*," here mentioned, may well have been situated on the southern side of the Temple,—which, (according to Josephus, the Jewish Historian,) towering up to a wondrous height, overhung a valley which it was impossible to gaze down upon without giddiness, and risk of falling.

6 and saith unto Him, If Thou be the SON of GOD, cast Thyself down:

Much comfort may be derived from the discovered limits of the power of the Evil One. "*Cast Thyself down*," are his words. By which infernal suggestion, the Tempter exposed his weakness rather than proved his power. He has no power to injure, till one shall have first "*Cast one's-self down*." He can persuade to the act; but he has no power, himself, to achieve it.

for it is written, He shall give His angels charge concerning Thee; and in *their* hands they shall bear Thee up, lest at any time Thou dash Thy foot against a stone.

It is observable that "the Father of lies" can yet make appeal to Holy Writ. He quotes Scripture but once; and then, with consummate craft. The quotation, however specious, is discovered, first, not to be in point; for although the 91st Psalm declares that God will give His Angels charge concerning CHRIST, (and all that are His,)—what encouragement is thereby furnished why He, or any of His servants, should rush headlong on destruction? Moreover, the clause which implies *the condition* of such angelic guardianship, the Arch-fiend craftily omits,—namely, "*in all Thy ways*." It was none of CHRIST's ways to cast Himself down from the Temple; nor will the Imitation of CHRIST ever lead His servants into such a perilous path. Lastly, Satan arrests his quotation just in time: for the very next words of the Psalm⁽ⁱ⁾ foretell the victory of the Christian soldier over the Enemy of his Salvation, and over all the Power of the Enemy.

7 JESUS said unto him, It is written again, Thou shalt not tempt the LORD thy God.

The quotation is from Deuteronomy vi. 16. It was not, of course, addressed by CHRIST to Satan, as if implying that He, *the speaker*, were "the LORD his God,"—

(h) St. John iv. 34.

(i) Ps. xci. 13.

(which nevertheless would have been a most true application of the text :) but simply in proof that, *as Man*, He could not lawfully comply with the suggestion of His Adversary. It is therefore such a reply as any one of ourselves, His members, might make at any time; whence its peculiar graciousness and value on the lips of our glorified Head, who hereby teaches us by His example how to encounter temptation in our own person, and in what spirit to overcome the Tempter.

The guilt, then, of tempting God is incurred as often as "we forsake the ordinary path of duty, without obligation or necessity; and thus, without the Word or Providence of God inviting us, become involved in strange difficulties or imminent dangers. In this course," (to use the words of a great man), "no support is to be calculated on from that Power without which we can do nothing."

The Scripture quoted to Satan by our SAVIOUR CHRIST, is full of instruction, as thus applied by Him. Moses spoke the words in question with reference to the distrustful murmuring of the people, whereby they tempted God. But our SAVIOUR, by His present application of them, reminds us that impetuous and unwarrantable presumption on the Divine protection, no less than impatient distrust of His Power, and Love,—is Unbelief; disguised under a more subtle, perhaps, but certainly not under a less dangerous, form. It may *seem* to be Reliance upon God; but, *in reality*, it is Idolatry of Self. To Faith, must be added *Patience*,—the patient waiting for God,—if we would escape the snare which Satan spread no less for the Holy One, when he had "set Him on a pinnacle of the Temple," than for the Israelites when they tempted God at Massah,^(k) And this is, perhaps, the reason of the remarkable prominence given to the grace of *Patience*, both by our LORD and His Apostles;^(l) a circumstance, as it may be thought, which has not altogether attracted the attention which it deserves.

8 Again, the Devil taketh Him up into an exceeding high mountain, and sheweth Him all the kingdoms of the world, and the glory of them;

It is impossible to say *what* Mountain was the scene of this, the Third Temptation. But since there is no Mountain in the world which commands such a spectacle which is here indicated, (neither, indeed, *can* be,) we may rest well assured that it was by some subtle device of him who is elsewhere styled "the Prince of the Power of the Air,"^(m) that "all the kingdoms of the World, and *the glory* of them," were made to display themselves in dazzling order before the human eyes of the second Adam. This becomes plainer from St. Luke's account of the same transaction,—iv. 5; where see the note.

9 and saith unto Him, All these things will I give Thee, if Thou wilt fall down and worship me.

The remark which was made on ver. 6, here again presents itself. Notwithstanding this boastful speech of the Enemy, it is evident that the *surrender of the will* is needful before he can proceed a single step with his infernal purpose. The Devil cannot give riches to whom he will: but to those only who are willing to receive them of him.

Far higher consolation, however, is contained in this place of Scripture. Many holy men have been thrown into dismay and perplexity by the blasphemous thoughts with which they have been occasionally tormented. Let all such take comfort in the discovery that Satan here suggests foul Blasphemy to their Incarnate LORD. He knew him not, for certain, to be God, indeed; but he already suspected no less: and that he had to do with one of wondrous spiritual attainment,—a most holy person,—he had at least discovered. Yet did Satan dare to suggest to Him no less sin than devil-worship!

10 Then saith JESUS unto him, Get thee hence Satan: for it is

(k) Deut. vi. 16, &c.

(l) St. Luke xvi. 19. Rom. ii. 7; v. 3, 4; viii. 25; xii. 12; xv. 4, 5; 2 Cor. vi. 4; xii. 12; Coloss. i. 11; 1 Thess. i. 3; v. 11; 2 Thess. i. 4; iii. 5; 1 Tim. iii. 3; vi. 11; 2 Tim. ii. 24; iii. 10; Titus ii. 2; Heb. vi. 12; x. 36; xii. 1; St. James i. 3, 4; v. 7, 8, 10, 11; 1 Pet. ii. 20; 2 Peter i. 6; Rev. i. 9; ii. 2, 3, 19; iii. 10; xiii. 10; xiv. 12.

(m) Ephes. ii. 2.

written, Thou shalt worship the LORD thy God, and Him only shalt thou serve.

The Captain of our Salvation is found to answer every suggestion of the Enemy by a single sentence of THE LAW,—as contained in the Book of Deuteronomy: viz., viii. 3; vi. 16; vi. 13. These were His “smooth stones out of the brook.”⁽ⁿ⁾ He condescends not to His Adversary,—no, not even to point out the hollowness of each proposal; but pierces him at once with the “sharp two-edged sword which goeth out of His mouth,”^(o)—the sword of the SPIRIT, which is the Word of God.^(p)

11 Then the Devil leaveth Him, and, behold, Angels came and ministered unto Him.

The Tempter, baffled in every endeavour,—withdraws in wonder: and, oh blessed contrast! behold Angels are hastening to minister to the mysterious necessity of the Son of Man.

Leighton says beautifully,—“This know, that our LORD is tender of us, and will inlay our painful conflicts with sweet comforts. And these, in a high degree, usually follow hard encounters patiently and stoutly sustained. Our LORD had a cordial draught both before and after this conflict: before, in the last verse of chap. iii.—He was confirmed in the very point He was assaulted in: ‘This is My Beloved Son.’ And as He was confirmed before, so was He comforted after: ‘Angels came, and ministered unto Him.’ Oh! the sweet issue our LORD gives to many a sad battle of weak Christians, wherein they possibly thought once that all was lost, and that they never should hold out, and come through it! But never think so. We shall come through all, and the day shall be ours.”

12 Now when JESUS had heard that John was cast into prison, He departed into Galilee;

Between the last verse,^(q) and the present, if you would know what happened, read St. John's Gospel from the 19th verse of chapter i. to the 43rd verse of chapter iv.

The Imprisonment of John is thus distinctly noticed by all the four Evangelists (St. Matt. iv. 12,—St. Mark i. 14,—St. Luke iv. 14,—St. John iv. 43.) in order, with the greater clearness, to mark the beginning of our LORD's Ministry. He had already wrought miracles, and made disciples; but it is from *this* event that His public career more especially dates. See ver. 17, and the note there. Notice also what St. Peter says, in Acts x. 37.

Concerning the circumstances which led to John's imprisonment by Herod the Tetrarch, see the note on St. Mark vi. 17. The event itself is related by the present Evangelist, in chap. xiv. 3, 4.

No remark, however, will be found,—either there or elsewhere,—on the extremely short duration of the Baptist's Ministry; to which, in the infinite Wisdom of God, the space of *one* year, at the utmost, was assigned. Nor, indeed, is it *the manner* of the SPIRIT so to convey instruction. The facts are given; or the facts may, by careful study, be found out. To draw inferences from them, is almost always left to individual hearts. Let us not, from this place of Scripture, for instance, fail to derive two important lessons: first,—an intimation of the mighty result which may be achieved in a very small space of time: next,—a hint that there is no knowing how soon God may have done with us; and that it is quite a mistake to covet for ourselves, or for others, a prolonged life,—on the supposition that we might thereby be able to serve God effectually for a longer time. He does not *require* our services, at all. He certainly does not take us *out* of the World, till He has no more work left for us to do *in* it. “Let all rather study for themselves, and wish unto others, that they may be diligent in their work while their day lasts, be it short or long; faithful and fruitful in their generation; and the shorter their day is like to be, work the faster. For, certainly, the good of life is not in the *length* of it; but in the *use* of it.”—They are the words of Archbishop Leighton.

(n) 1 Sam. xvii. 40.

(o) Rev. i. 16 and xix. 15, 21. Compare 2 Thess. ii. 8; Rev. ii. 16.

(p) Ephes. vi. 17. Compare Hebrews iv. 12.

(q) ver. 11.

13 And leaving Nazareth, He came and dwelt in Capernaum.

When the Forerunner's Imprisonment was announced to our LORD, He was staying for two days at Sychar in Samaria.^(r) Thereupon, He departed into Galilee,—taking Nazareth, “where he had been brought up,”^(s) in His way. For the account of what then occurred, see St. Luke's Gospel,—iv. 16—30. “Leaving Nazareth,”—“not being honoured in His own Country. So, commonness of things make them cheap with us, how excellent soever;”—“He came and dwelt in Capernaum.”

The town stood near the North-Western extremity of the Lake of Tiberias, or (as it is oftener called) the *Sea* of Galilee; but there exist no remains of it, and its very site is uncertain.

Our SAVIOUR came to dwell by the sea-side, in order to fish for men.

14 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet,

Not till *now*, therefore, was the veil removed from this place of ancient Prophecy. Yet how mysterious was the fulfilment of what had been here foretold! A forlorn Stranger,—a houseless Wanderer,—a poor, persecuted Man: yet, *this* was the “great Light!” *This* was He who was to “make glorious” the land of Zabulon and the land of Naphtali!

Such discoveries become lessons and warnings to ourselves. Not only with reference to unfulfilled prophecy, are they in the highest degree suggestive: but they surely invite also to a more watchful study of incidents altogether private and personal. Promises of Divine Help, duly fulfilled, but fulfilled in a shape under which they fail to strike us:—offers of Mercy,—opportunities of Blessing,—the very presence of our LORD,—all duly vouchsafed to us; yet, it may be, all despised, neglected, over-looked:—and that, because we have not the ears to hear, or the hearts to discover, or the eyes to recognize Him when we see Him!

15, 16 saying, The land of Zabulon, and the land of Nephtholim, *by* the way of the sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles; the people which sat in darkness saw great light; and to them which sat in the region and shadow of death light is sprung up.

The finger of Prophecy had not failed to point out the spot where MESSIAH was to dwell so long, and work so many wonders. The place of Isaiah here quoted, is found in chap. ix. 1—2.

Divinely indeed did it happen that, in “the borders of Zabulon and Nephtholim,”—the spot, namely, where the territory respectively assigned to those patriarchs,^(t) met,—the SAVIOUR of His people should have come to dwell: for it was precisely the inhabitants of *this* district, who, first of all the Jews, were led into Captivity by Tiglath Pileser, King of Assyria, *b.c.* 740; as related in the Second Book of Kings.^(u) So that, as one of the ancients points out,—“where the Law was first forgotten, *there* the Gospel was first preached.” The Region which had been the first to suffer Captivity, was the first to enjoy the Light of that Truth which maketh free.^(x)

The prophecy of Isaiah here quoted, contains a special allusion to the Assyrian Captivity; for,—contrasting the fate of the region here spoken of, in the days of Messiah, with its former desolate condition,—the Prophet is thought by learned men to have written somewhat as follows:—“Nevertheless, there shall not hereafter be darkness in the Land which was distressed. In the former time, He debased the land of Zabulon, and the land of Naphtali; but in the latter time He hath made it glorious: even the way of the Sea, beyond Jordan, Galilee of the Nations.” And then follows,—“The people which walked in darkness have seen a great Light,”^(y) &c.

(r) St. John iv. 5 and 43.

(s) See St. Matt. ii. 23; St. Luke iv. 16 and St. Mark i. 9.

(t) Joshua xix. 10 to 16; 32 to 39.

(u) xv. 29: and see 1 Chron. v. 26.

(x) St. John viii. 32, 36.

(y) Compare this with the rendering of Isaiah ix. 1, 2, in the authorized version of the English Bible.

The Northern part of Galilee was called "*Galilee of the Gentiles*" because it bordered upon a heathen land, and was itself partly heathen. "Twenty cities" of Galilee had been given by Solomon to Hiram, king of Tyre.(z) Well, therefore, might such a people be said to *sit* in darkness;" as not knowing which way they should go.

The constancy of the Imagery employed by the HOLY SPIRIT, cannot fail to strike every one who is at all familiar with the Gospels. Consider, in connection with the appellation in the text, such places as the following:—St. John i. 5 to 9; iii. 19 to 21; viii. 12; ix. 5; xi. 9, 10; xii. 35, 36, and 46.

17 From that time JESUS began to preach,

That is to say, from the time that John was cast into prison,—which was the occasion of our SAVIOUR's departure into Galilee, spoken of in ver. 12.

and to say, Repent: for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

This had been the Sermon of the Baptist, also. See chap. iii. 2, and the note there. "Not only the same sense, but the very same words. He who needed to borrow from none, but gives all to all, yet disdains not to preach this over after John Baptist."

"Oh, sweet invitation,—the offer of pardon to a repenting sinner! But how much more that of a Kingdom! He might have said, 'Repent, for the Prison of Hell is at hand,' if ye do not: but He rather draws by the happiness and glory attending our return." So far, pious Leighton.

18 And JESUS, walking by the sea of Galilee,

For some account of this Lake, see the note on St. Mark i. 16.

saw two brethren, Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother, casting a net into the sea:

To read this, no one would suppose that Simon and Andrew were well known to the SAVIOUR, and had already become His Disciples: but it is the manner of the Evangelists when they mention a person or place for the first time, to introduce the name in this manner. Observe how Nazareth,—for thirty years' CHRIST's home,—is mentioned by St. Matthew, in chap. ii. 23.

Very surprising indeed will the ensuing brief narrative appear, to one who reads it with the first chapter of St. John's Gospel(a) fresh in his memory. The comparison of the two histories leads to many an important inference concerning our SAVIOUR's method with His Disciples. There was no constraint put upon their wills or affections. To "abide with Him,"(b) might, or might not, avail to draw the heart effectually to Him. The very witnessing of a Miracle, (like that performed at Cana of Galilee,(c) was not enough to produce, even in faithful men, the kind of conviction we are apt to suppose. God left them to themselves. The seed of His spoken Word fell,—as in the parable,—by the way-side, or upon stony places, or among thorns, or into good ground, and it met with a corresponding fate.(d) How nearly does *our* position resemble *theirs*! How closely does the reception which CHRIST now meets with in the World, resemble that which awaited Him "all the time that He went in and out among" men!(e)

These men, from being Disciples of John the Baptist, had transferred their obedience to CHRIST. The remarks just now offered are meant to explain how it may have happened that when they beheld the Baptist thrown into prison, they resumed their former calling.

for they were fishers.

Let us pause for a moment on this short sentence; which declares, by the way, the temporal estate, and lowly calling of the first Apostles.

(z) 1 Kings ix. 11.
(c) St. John ii. 2.

(a) ver. 35 to 42.
(d) St. Matthew xiii. 3 to 8.

(b) St. John i. 39.
(e) Acts i. 21.

It was the will of God to choose the men by whose means He intended to remodel the World, out of the humbler class; that so, no flesh might glory in His presence:(*f*) nor any pretend that human wit had a share in the miraculous leavening process which ensued. It was God, throughout; acting in, and through, most weak instruments.

But it can scarcely require to be stated that no encouragement whatever is thereby given to the rashness of unlearned men of low degree,—thrusting themselves forward, in the vain pretence that they are as the Apostles were; and presuming to usurp the seat of the learned, because (forsooth) it pleased God once to “choose the foolish things of the World to confound the wise; and the weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty.”(*g*) If the fishermen of Galilee taught all mysteries, it was, because in the place of mere Human wisdom, they enjoyed the extraordinary illumination of God’s Holy Spirit. They were miraculously enabled to speak with new tongues; and, for the subject of their discourse, it was not *they* who spoke, but the Spirit, within them, which gave them utterance.(*h*) When God consents to become our Teacher, and to work Miracles in our behalf, human helps may be neglected; but, *not till then*.

In the mean time, let it be carefully noted that God made choice of His Holy Apostles by no irrespective decree. Great indeed was the Faith, great the Zeal, marvellous must have been the Goodness to which those men had attained, who were destined hereafter to “sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.”(*i*) They did not become Saints *because* they were Apostles. On the contrary. Our Saviour *made* them Apostles, because they had become Saints. See the note on St. John i. 43, 44. In their personal sanctity, let all seek to resemble and to rival them. Their ministerial rights and privileges, let those who have not been duly called, agree to behold from a distance, and to revere.

And, humble as were the instruments which God employed for the Salvation of Mankind, so humbling was the Doctrine which He proposed to men’s acceptance. See 1 Cor. i. 18, and 20 to 23. The result might have been expected; namely, that “the poor *in spirit*,” alone,—who, in this case, were also “the *poor*,” as St. Paul expressly informs us,(*k*)—embraced the Kingdom.

19 And He saith unto them, Follow Me, and I will make you fishers of men.

It was a Divine circumstance that these great Apostles should have been of the number of those who “go down to the sea in ships, and occupy their business in great waters:”(l) for, to cast the net of the Kingdom,(*m*)—to fish for souls,—and to capture mighty draughts of men,—(“Casting the net in public preaching, and angling in private converse,”)—became their wondrous calling. Yet, how little must they have understood of the wondrous prophecy now delivered by Him, who “declareth the end from the beginning; and from ancient times, the things that are not yet done!”(*n*)

The Psalm just quoted proceeds, as if in a prophetic strain,—“These men see the works of the Lord, and His wonders in the deep.”—A great “work,” and a mighty “wonder,” truly, had now been wrought: for, unlikely as it may sound, this piece of narrative is certainly the same with *that* in St. Luke v. 1 to 11. The first Miraculous Draught of fishes, therefore, was the event which produced an abiding conviction in the minds of these four followers of the Lamb; proved the occasion of that prevailing summons to follow Christ, which drew after Him those two wondrous pairs of brethren,—the sons of Jonas, and the sons of Zebedee.

You will observe that this miracle was, in effect, an appeal to their *Faith*. They looked to capture *something* in their nets: but their success far surpassed the utmost limit of their hopes.

20 And they straightway left *their* nets, and followed Him.

St. Peter alluded to this hour, when he asked our Lord, long after,—“Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee: what shall we have therefore?”(*o*)

21 And going on from thence, He saw other two brethren,

(*f*) 1 Cor. i. 29.

(*g*) 1 Cor. i. 26.

(*h*) 1 Cor. i. 27.

(*i*) Psalm cvii. 23.

(*j*) Acts ii. 4.

(*k*) St. Matt. xiii. 47.

(*l*) St. Matt. xix. 28.

(*m*) St. Matt. xiii. 47.

(*n*) Isaiah xlvi. 10.

(*o*) St. Matthew xix. 27.

Observe how they are gathered, by two and two, into the fold: even as, by two and two, CHRIST will hereafter send them forth to preach.

These are *Brothers*; that so Nature may conspire with Grace in securing a firm foundation in Love for the edifice which is to follow. As, anciently, God builded on Moses and Aaron: (p) so, now, He builds on Peter and Andrew,—James and John.

James *the son of Zebedee*, and John his brother, in a ship with Zebedee their father, mending their nets:

They were “mending” the nets which—as St. Luke (q) specially informs us,—had been “broken,” by the multitude of the Fishes, which they had recently caught.

and he called them.

It will be perceived that, notwithstanding the conciseness of the narrative, mention has been made of the particular act in which the four Disciples were engaged at the time of their call: or rather, that this is the only thing which *is* mentioned. Two of them were casting a net into the sea, (r)—and two were occupied in the manner just now described.

Consider how carefully, in the case of many other of God's chosen servants, we find their occupation recorded, at the moment when the Divine summons first found them out. “The Lord took me,” says the prophet Amos, “as I followed the flock, and the Lord said unto me, Go, prophesy unto My people Israel.” (s) Such was the occupation of Moses (t) and of David. (u) Gideon was threshing wheat: (x) Saul, seeking the asses of his Father; (y) and Elisha, ploughing with twelve yoke of oxen. (z)—Nathaniel, beneath the fig-tree; (a) St. Matthew sitting at the Receipt of custom; (b) and Saul, journeying to Damascus; (c)—are examples of the same thing, in the New Testament: to which we may add the case of four other Apostles,—St. Peter and St. Andrew, St. James and St. John.

How are we hereby reminded that CHRIST is ever to be met with, in the path of duty! that no occupation is so secular, or so lowly, as to exclude us from the blessing of being found out, in the midst of it, by Him!

22 And they immediately left the ship and their Father, and followed Him.

Simon and Andrew forsook property,—James and John overlooked earthly ties,—for CHRIST's sake, and the Gospel's. Absolutely, they may appear not to have forsaken much: but it was *all they possessed*; and therefore, it was much to them.

Henceforth, the waves of this troublesome World,—the Ark of CHRIST's Church,—the net of the Gospel,—men's wandering wills;—*these* became the objects to which these holy men transferred all their anxieties.

23 And JESUS went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness, and all manner of diseases among the people.

This is the description of our LORD's First great Ministerial Journey, during which He traversed all Galilee. What a mighty narrative is here summed up in a few words! The laborious travel, and hardships, and weariness of many months;—the splendor of many hundred discourses, both public and private;—stupendous acts of Mercy,—countless miracles of Love:—all, are here despatched in fewer words than we should claim for the description of some of our most trivial actions.

Another circuit of Galilee, like the present, will be found noticed, and almost in the same terms, in chap. ix. 35. On both occasions, spiritual infirmity and bodily ailment are spoken of in such close connection, that it is impossible not to per-

(p) Exodus iv. 14, 15, and 27 to 32.

(s) Amos vii. 15.

(x) Judges vi. 11.

(a) St. John i. 48.

(q) St. Luke v. 6.

(t) Exod. iii. 1.

(y) 1 Sam. ix. 3 to 20.

(b) St. Matthew ix. 9, &c.

(r) See above, ver. 18.

(u) Psalm lxxviii. 70—71

(z) 1 Kings xix. 19.

(c) Acts ix. 3, &c.

ceive the relation which is intimated as subsisting between them : the latter, a type or emblem of the former;—the latter, no less than the former, a consequence of the Fall: both alike, symptoms of that great and general disorder, for the remedy of which the Son of Man had come into the world. Consider the language of St. Matthew viii. 16, 17. Moreover, the Miracles which He wrought were a pledge of His power; and therefore a confirmation of the Doctrines which He came to deliver.

24 And His fame went throughout all Syria: and they brought unto Him all sick people that were taken with divers diseases and torments, and those which were possessed with devils, and those which were lunatic, and those that had the palsy; and He healed them.

As might be expected, the fame of the Great Physician spreads far beyond the region actually traversed by Him. “Syria” denotes all the region situated to the North of the Country in which our Lord was at present preaching.

25 And there followed Him great multitudes of people from Galilee, and *from* Decapolis, and *from* Jerusalem, and *from* Judea, and *from* beyond Jordan.

So mighty a retinue was drawn after His blessed footsteps in consequence of His miraculous acts. “Decapolis,”—a word denoting *Ten Cities*, (of which Gadara was one,)—was the name of the district East of the Sea of Galilee.^(d) The present enumeration therefore amounts to a statement that the SAVIOUR, in the course of His first Ministerial Journey, was followed by multitudes from the Country on either side of the Jordan, as well as from the Capital City.

THE PRAYER.

O LORD, who for our sake didst fast forty days and forty nights; Give us grace to use such abstinence, that our flesh being subdued to the Spirit, we may ever obey Thy godly motions in righteousness and true holiness, to Thy honour and glory, who livest and reignest with the FATHER and the HOLY GHOST, one God, world without end. Amen.

(d) St. Luke viii. 26.

CHAPTER V.

1 CHRIST *beginneth His sermon in the mount: 3 declaring who are blessed, 13 who are the salt of the earth, 14 the light of the world, the city on an hill, 15 the candle: 17 that He came to fulfil the law. 21 What it is to kill, 27 to commit adultery, 33 to swear: 38 exhorteth to suffer wrong, 44 to love even our enemies, 48 and to labour after perfectness.*

1, 2 AND seeing the multitudes, He went up into a mountain: and when He was set, His disciples came unto Him: and He opened His mouth, and taught them, saying,

The "Sermon on the Mount,"—for by *that* name the first and the fullest of our LORD's public discourses is known,—begins at this place. As the Old Law, promulgated by Moses, had been originally delivered on a mountain, (that is, Sinai;) so was it proper that on a mountain also, the New Law should be delivered by CHRIST. But the contrast of the circumstances is remarkable. The Law was given *then*, amid terrors; *now*, amid calm. *Then*, God spake to His people by the hand of Moses; *now*, face to face.

3 Blessed *are* the poor in spirit: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

It seems a beautiful circumstance, that whereas the volume of the Old Testament ends by threatening a *Curse*, the Gospel of the Kingdom should begin with the promise of a *Blessing*.

Observe, that the first of these eight "Beatitudes," (as they are called,) is a blessing pronounced on Humility; on that state of heart which, conscious of inward, not outward, poverty and need, knows its own utter destitution. So that the promise runs parallel with that other promise of our Divine Master, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted." (a) Our LORD points out Pride,—spiritual Pride,—as the root and source of all evil. For He speaks not here of a mere absence of this world's goods; but of that state of heart which worldly poverty is often found to maintain, or to produce. Hence, St. Luke was guided to record this first Beatitude in different language:—"Blessed be ye poor: for yours is the Kingdom of God." See the note on St. Luke vi. 20.

Observe, therefore, that what God regards is the inclination of the heart,—the disposition of the will. A very beggar may yet be full of proud thoughts: or if, through misery, his soul be kept low, yet may he be for ever pining after that which, if obtained, would infallibly inflate him. Now, such an one comes not, cannot come, within the terms of the blessedness here promised.

4 Blessed *are* they that mourn: for they shall be comforted.

The mourning here spoken of, is not, of course, mere worldly grief: (for "the sorrow of the world," as the Apostle declares, "worketh death:")(b) but it is *that* affliction, *that* "godly sorrow," which is sure, sooner or later, to overtake every

(a) St. Matt. xxiii. 12; St. Luke xiv. 11, and xviii. 14.

(b) 2 Cor. vii. 10.

man who faithfully endeavours to walk in the way of God's commandments. It is a sad, but a true prophecy,—“Yea, and all that will live godly in CHRIST JESUS, shall suffer persecution,”(c) Those who mourn after such a sort, have the promise of “the Comforter, which is the HOLY GHOST.”(d)

5 Blessed *are* the meek : for they shall inherit the earth.

Our SAVIOUR here quotes the words of Psalm xxxvii. 11. That wondrous promise seems to involve a contradiction: for surely, (we say,) the meek are apt rather to be thrust out, and driven away, from their possessions. Nevertheless, the thing which is here promised will infallibly be found to come to pass; for He is faithful that promiseth. The meek shall possess the earth, even *by right*; for it is said—“they shall *inherit*” it.

Only, let those who earnestly desire this blessing,—as many as desire to possess the earth,—beware lest they become *possessed by it*. For, in its fullest sense, this promise doubtless has reference to those “*new Heavens*,” and that “*new Earth*,” of which St. Peter speaks,(e) and for which the Saints of God are ever looking.

6 Blessed *are* they which do hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled.

The keenness of bodily appetite,—of Hunger and of Thirst,—was given us, in order that we might know how ardent should be the craving of our Souls after Holiness. This spiritual craving the Psalmist felt, when he cried,—“As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after Thee, O God.”(f) Now it is here promised, among many other things, that this deep longing of the Saints,—alluded to, rather than described,—shall be fully satisfied in Heaven. “They shall hunger no more,” (as it is said,) “neither thirst any more”(g) For the LAMB which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters. And” (it is added) “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.”(h) words which recall the form of the second and fourth of these Beatitudes, as St. Luke exhibits them:—“Blessed are ye that *hunger* now, for ye shall be filled. Blessed are ye that *weep* now, for ye shall laugh.”(i)

Not only, however, in the World to come, but in this World also, will the soul's desire be satisfied: *fully* there: *here*, only imperfectly and in part:—but the longings, with which it dilates itself *here*, render it capable of the greater fullness *hereafter*. And we know that the flesh being subdued to the Spirit, is apter for righteousness and true holiness:(k) by which remark it is intended to connect these words of Scripture with the parallel place in St. Luke's Gospel,—vi. 21.

7 Blessed *are* the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy.

Thus, God pledges Himself to the bestowal of His Divine mercies,—which are eternal, and beyond price; on the condition that we show mercy in human things,—which are brief and valueless.

How often is this condition of future blessedness insisted upon in the Gospel! Consider St. Matt. vi. 12, 14, 15: xviii. 21—35, especially the last verse. St. Mark xi. 25, 26, &c.

8 Blessed *are* the pure in heart: for they shall see God.

“The pure in heart:” for, so that purity be *there*, the lips and the hands,—yea, the whole life, (like waters flowing from the fountain-head,) will perforce be pure.

The vision of God is made dependent in many places of Scripture besides this, on holiness of character; or, as it is here said, on purity of heart. “Follow peace with all men,” says St. Paul, “and holiness, *without which no man shall see the Lord*.”(l) “He that hath clean hands, and a *pure heart*,” shall hereafter “ascend

(c) 2 Tim. iii. 12, and compare St. John xvi. 33, Acts xiv. 22, &c.

(d) St. John xiv. 26. Compare 2 Cor. i. 4; also St. Luke xvi. 25, and Rev. vii. 14.

(e) 2 Pet. iii. 13. (f) Ps. xlii. 10 (g) Rev. vii. 16. Compare Isaiah xlix. 10.

(h) Rev. vii. 17. Compare Rev. xxi. 4, and Isaiah xxv. 8.

(i) St. Luke vi. 21.

(k) See the Collect for the First Sunday in Lent.

(l) Heb. xii. 14.

into the hill of the Lord,"(*m*) and like the highest order of the holy Angels,(*n*), "see the King in His beauty."(*o*)

But the beloved Disciple in a certain place,(*p*) even more strikingly says,—“We know that when He shall appear, we shall be like Him, *for* we shall see Him as He is:”—thus making a restoration to the Divine image,(*q*) and the seeing of God, dependent notions. And so, without pretending to solve the hard question of *how* this mysterious promise is to be fulfilled, (for who can tell what a glorious heritage of loftier powers may be reserved for the Spiritual Body?)(*r*) let us be sure that like every other divine prophecy, it *will have* its own wondrous fulfillment,—partially, in this world; more fully, in the next: *here*, “as through a glass darkly;” *there*, “face to face.”(*s*) We may be certain, moreover, that this is a matter concerning which he who leads the holiest life, will *know the most*.

It has been thought that there is something progressive in the blessings here enumerated, one rising above another: and doubtless they follow, (like the stars of Heaven,) in a beautiful and wonderful order, though it may be difficult, always, to find it out. This Beatitude and the last stand together instructively. How lovely a character would his be, who should add to his “mercifulness,” (not a very rare grace, it may be thought,) “purity of heart,”—which is perhaps the very rarest grace of all!

9 Blessed *are* the peace-makers: for they shall be called the children of God.

“The peace-makers,”—whether those who undertake the blessed office of reconciling brethren at enmity; or those less conspicuous ones who are engaged in overcoming their own warring lusts and affections,—making peace in their own hearts,—and setting up the Kingdom of God within themselves.(*t*) The first work avails little without the second.

You observe that this Sabbath of the Soul stands in the *seventh* place.

To produce “on earth, Peace,”(*u*) was the great office of the Gospel,—whose Author is called “the Prince of Peace.”(*x*) To peace-makers is here assigned as their peculiar blessedness, *the likeness of God*.

10 Blessed *are* they which are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the Kingdom of Heaven.

“Persecuted—*for righteousness' sake* ;” else, no prospect of blessedness is held out.

The eighth Beatitude has the same promise attached to it as the first,—see ver. 3. The first and eighth Beatitudes, therefore, are like the corresponding clasps at the two extremities of a chain,—where every bead is a blessing.

But, in truth, “the Kingdom of Heaven” is the one reward promised in every instance; although under various names, according to the various Graces specified. Just as it is the character of *the Just*,—though viewed under different aspects,—to which the promises are all alike addressed.

11, 12 Blessed are ye, when *men* shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely, for My sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad: for great *is* your reward in Heaven: for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.

“Revile you,” to your face: “say all manner of evil against you,” behind your back: “persecute you,” in any way. But all this must be done *falsely*—and *for CHRIST's sake*, in order to bring us within the terms of the blessing.

“The prophets which were before you;”—by which saying, CHRIST associates

{*m*} Ps. xxiv. 4.

{*n*} St. Matt. xviii. 10.

{*o*} Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

{*p*} 1 St. John iii. 2.

{*q*} See Genesis i. 26; and compare Psalm xvii. 15.

{*r*} Consider the following texts, Job xix. 26, 27; 1 Cor. ii. 9; (quoted from Isaiah lxiv. 4); St. Matt. xxii. 30.

{*s*} 1 Cor. xiii. 12.

{*t*} St. Luke xvii. 21.

{*u*} St. Luke ii. 14.

{*x*} Isaiah ix. 6. Compare Ephesians ii. 14. St. John xiv. 27, &c.

the humblest of His suffering servants with that "goodly fellowship of the Prophets" "of whom the World was not worthy." (y)

13 Ye are the salt of the earth :

The Saints are declared to be that which keeps this old Earth of ours from corruption. Their blessed office is to be mankind "the savour of life unto life." (z) . . . The transition is more obvious in St. Luke's Gospel. There, the preceding Beatitudes are *addressed to the Disciples*, "Blessed are ye:" whence it follows, in this place, "Ye are the salt of the earth."

but if the salt have lost his savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men.

That is,—Beware lest you *lose* this property of sustaining the World's life! "For it is impossible," (as the great Apostle declares,) "for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come, if *they* shall fall away, to renew *them* again to repentance." (a) With what salt shall *they* be salted, to whom was committed the World's salting?

14, 15 Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on an hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house.

As "salt," in ver. 13, was descriptive of the *inward* condition, so "light," in this place, has reference to the *outward* aspect. The Church of CHRIST,—like the faithful witness in Heaven, (b)—shines with borrowed glory: glory derived from "the Sun of Righteousness," (c) who styles Himself, "the Light of the World." (d) Being set on an hill, (the "holy Hill of Sion,") the Church neither can, nor should, escape observation. It is as absurd to suppose that a man would first light a candle, and then seek to smother its beams under a bushel, or to suppose that the Divine Author of our Faith should intend those whom He entrusts with the Light of his Gospel to sit down in the shadow of bodily ease and self-indulgence, and thus to conceal the glory of their trust.

16 Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven.

Why should men "see our good works?" Not certainly in order to promote conceit, and a spirit of self-righteousness, in order to glorify *us*; but only, in order that the sight of those Works may induce beholders to glorify *our Father which is in Heaven*. It is God who is glorified in His Saints.

17 Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfill.

Our Saviour fulfilled *the Law* when He submitted to all its precepts:—*the Prophets*, when He either performed or endured whatever things they had foretold concerning Himself; both "the Law and the Prophets," by His life-long acts of Love. (e) But the present declaration was true in another, and even a more striking sense; for we know that all things which, under the Law, had been imperfectly conveyed by type or shadow, exhibited their true intent, and discovered their full meaning, only under the Gospel dispensation. The very history of God's ancient people, seen by the light of CHRIST's words, or those of His holy Apostles, is proved to be

(y) Hebrews ix. 32—38.

(b) Psalm lxxxix. 37.

(c) St. John viii. 12; ix. 5; xii. 35, &c.

(z) 2 Cor. ii. 16.

(c) Malachi iv. 2.

(a) Hebrews vi. 4—6.

(e) St. Matt. vii. 12.

replete with unsuspected teaching; and may be truly said to have been only then "fulfilled" when CHRIST came into the World.

18 For verily I say unto you, till Heaven and Earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.

By this mention of "one jot or tittle," we are reminded of the dignity and importance which attaches to the very least letter of God's written Law. So solemn a declaration should convince the most reluctant heart, how utterly baseless must be the pretence that the teaching of the New Testament casts any slight whatever upon the teaching of the Old: or that Christianity is in any respect contradictory of the Jewish Religion. "Remember ye *the Law of Moses* My servant,"—are among the latest words of the Prophet Malachi, iv. 4: and yet the first words of the Gospel were already on his lips.^(f) But the veil which at first covered so much of Divine meaning, was afterwards lifted off and withdrawn.

19 Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the Kingdom of Heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach *them*, the same shall be called great in the Kingdom of Heaven.

That is,—So far am I from annulling the ancient Law of My people, that I declare I will lightly esteem the man who assumes to himself the liberty of violating the least precept of that Law,—and so sets an example of disobedience. Whereas, the most strict obedience shall enjoy the most high reward.

20 For I say unto you, That except your righteousness shall exceed *the righteousness* of the Scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

The same train of thought is continued:—For I say unto you that your righteousness, although resembling *in kind* that of the Scribes and Pharisees, unless it infinitely surpasses theirs *in degree*, will not avail to win for you even an entrance into My Kingdom.

We are next,—in verses 21 to 26,—presented with a specimen of Divine Interpretation of that Law which, in its true spirit and intention, our Saviour professes that He came "not to destroy." The Commandment first noticed, is the sixth; which, He who gave it so interprets as to show that in that negative precept, ("Thou shalt do no Murder,") is contained the Law of Love. And this, perhaps, is the reason why our Blessed LORD begins with that particular commandment; instead of the fifth, for example: for "Love is the fulfilling of the Law."^(g)

21 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment.

"Thou shalt not kill,"—which precept is found in Exod. xx. 13, and Deut. v. 17,—is the whole of the actual quotation. The rest of the sentence may be inferred from what is said in Levit. xxiv. 21, and Numbers xxxv. 16, 17.

22 But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire.

Moses,—proclaiming CHRIST's words "to them of old time,"—had forbidden Murder; and affixed a certain penalty to the crime. The "Prophet like unto Moses," republishing His ancient code, affixes that same penalty to what might

(f) See Malachi iv. 5, 6. Compare also iii. 1, and St. Mark i. 1, 2.

(g) See Romans xiii. 8—10. Compare also Galatians v. 14; St. Matt. vii. 12, and xxii. 39, 40; 1 Timothy i. 5; Coloss. iii. 14; St. James ii. 8.

seem a far lower offence; but which *was*, in the mind of the Lawgiver, a violation of the original command. . . . "I say unto you:" for He taught them as One having authority,"—as it is expressly stated at the end of the present discourse. (*h*)

By simply human terms, three degrees of punishment, divine and future, are here described; or rather, things heavenly and unutterable are here indicated by language with which our Lord's hearers were familiar. "The Judgment," and "the Council," were the names of two well-known Jewish courts. "Gehenna," or as it is here Englished, "hell-fire," denotes an extremity of suffering, by referring to the hideous fate of dead corpses in the valley of Hinnom. (*i*) In this way, our merciful Lord neither dazzled men with pictures of Heaven; nor distracted them by descriptions of Hell: but by the use of images either of delight or of despair, opened to His followers as much concerning the unseen world as it was needful for them to know.

Corresponding with the three punishments already noticed, are three offences. First, causeless Anger which yet maintains silence:—next, the same Anger, allowing itself in reproachful speech:—lastly, the same Anger, when it proceeds to open insult and unmeasured provocation.

It is remarkable to what trifles (as it might be thought) in behaviour, the precepts of our Blessed Lord descend. See the note on St. Matt. vi. 6.

23, 24 Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee; leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift.

Not, observe,—“If thou hast aught against thy brother;” but, “*If thy brother hath aught against thee:*” which certainly is a great guarantee that there shall be reconciliation.

On the other hand, his “having somewhat *against thee*,” is probably a sign that *thou* wert the offender. Had *he* been the offender, there would be no need that thou shouldst leave thy gift, and go thy way. A mere act of forgiveness would have been all that was required. Still, he may have been the author of the wrong, and the bearer of malice both. Any way, there must be reconciliation.

Compare with this, the exhortation before Holy Communion, to be “in perfect charity with all men,”—in order to be “meet partakers of those holy mysteries.” For “we have an altar,” (as St. Paul says,)(*j*) and thereto we bring our gift,—even as the Jews were taught to do.

25, 26 Agree with thine adversary quickly, whiles thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.

These are two very difficult verses; but after what has gone before, their general purport is plain. It is still reconciliation, which is recommended; still, the law of Love, which is enforced; and, as it seems, by a most awful threat: for how can “the uttermost farthing” *ever* be paid?

“Whilest thou art in the way with him,” must denote the days of the years of our mortal pilgrimage. “The Judge,” and “the Officer,” and “Prison,”—are terms, borrowed from the usage of human courts, which seem descriptive of what will be hereafter; if death should find a man unreconciled to the adversary, who is prepared to plead against him before the Judgment-seat of God.

Our attention is directed, next, to the requirements of the ALMIGHTY in the seventh Commandment.

27, 28 Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not commit adultery: but I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.

(*h*) St. Matt. vii. 29.

(*i*) 2 Kings xxiii. 10; Jer. vii. 31, xxxii. 35.

(*j*) Heb. xiii. 10.

"As for God, His way is perfect."^(k) "Every word of God is pure."^(l) "The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times."^(m)

Righteous also, assuredly, are His judgments. For it is not, of course, *the ability*, but *the will*: not so much *the act*, as *the desire*, which He must regard.

One of the ancients has well remarked on this place, that neither will *she* be held guiltless who so dresses and adorns herself as to attract men's eyes, in this sort, towards her. She mixes the poison, and offers the cup, even though none be found to drink it.

But though it must be fully admitted, that even the random glances of an unguarded eye are not without sin,—yet, it seems right to point out that it is *not those* which our Saviour is here condemning. It is the "looking—to lust:" that is, looking with the intention to gratify the impure thought; with purpose to feed the unholy desire.

29 And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

"Thy right eye,"—for *that* was the offending member. "*Eyes full of adultery*,"—as the SPIRIT says in another place.⁽ⁿ⁾ Whence holy Job declares of himself, with reference to this very matter,—"*I made a covenant with mine eyes.*"^(o)

"Thy right eye." No attempt is made, either here or elsewhere, to diminish the greatness of the required sacrifice. Consider the language of Genesis xxii. 2.

Our LORD certainly cannot mean that we are to mutilate our bodies,—which are temples of the HOLY GHOST:^(p) but that the sense of sight must be mortified as effectually on such occasions, as if "the light of the body," (which is the eye,) were utterly, and for ever, extinguished.

30 And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not *that* thy whole body should be cast into hell.

Having mentioned the "right Eye," (for the special reason noted above,) our Saviour adds the "right Hand,"—probably because He would convey the lesson that, for His sake, and in order to save the whole body, we must be prepared to sacrifice the dearest and most precious thing we possess. His language conveys a lively notion of the uncompromising jealousy, the relentless severity, with which we must watch every avenue, and cut off every occasion, of sin in ourselves.

31 It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement:

Alluding to Deut. xxiv. 1,—a permission which, as our LORD tells us in another place,^(q) Moses gave the people "because of the hardness of their hearts." This permission had come to be monstrously abused in our SAVIOUR'S time; so that, on any petty pretext, a man thought himself at liberty to put away his wife.

32 But I say unto you, that whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.

The solemn truth is implied, that the woman, so put away, continues to be the wife of him who put her away: for God once joined them together. "Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh."^(r)

33 Again, ye have heard that it hath been said by them of old time,

(k) 2 Sam. xxii. 31; Psalm xviii. 30.

(m) Psalm xii. 6. See also Ps. cxix. 140.

(p) 1 Cor. vi. 19, iii. 16.

(l) Proverbs xxx. 5.

(n) 2 Pet. ii. 14.

(q) St. Matt. xix. 8.

(o) Job xxx. 1.

(r) St. Matt. xix. 6.

Thou shalt not forswear thyself, but shalt perform unto the LORD thine oaths :

Our LORD proceeds to the eighth Commandment. To "forswear," in this place, is to fail in the performance of something sworn. The very words do not occur in the Law of Moses ; but the command is found in Deut. xxxiii. 21, and 23 : Numbers xxx. 2.

34, 35, 36, 37. But I say unto you, Swear not at all ; neither by Heaven ; for it is God's throne : nor by the Earth ; for it is His footstool : neither by Jerusalem ; for it is the city of the great King. Neither shalt thou swear by thy head, because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea ; Nay, nay : for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.

These words of our Saviour CHRIST are very explicit, and God forbid that we should seek to weaken and explain them away ; or to evade their obvious force and meaning, by a merely human gloss. Yet may it be humbly suggested concerning the preceding passage, and all that follows, down to ver. 42, that the blessed words are not to be taken so much *in their Letter*, as *in their Spirit*. By which, it is not meant that they are to be only admitted *in part* : but that their full height, and depth, and breadth,—their entire scope,—their real meaning,—is to be sought for in the other revelations of the SPIRIT : to be illustrated by the other sayings, and by the actions, of our LORD and His chiefest Saints. For as, when the same Divine Speaker commands us to call no man our Father on earth, *(s)* He *cannot* be thought to forbid the ordinary language of our nature ; so here, He cannot be supposed to forbid that in a Court of Law, (for example,) a man should take the oath prescribed by competent authority. Nay, on a certain occasion, He took it to Himself. *(t)* There are instances of Divine swearing, in Genesis xxii. 16, (compare Hebrews vi. 13), the Psalms (ex. 4), and elsewhere. St. Paul again solemnly calls God to witness in more than one of his Epistles : for example, in Rom. i. 9 : 2 Cor. i. 23 : xi. 31 : Gal. i. 20 : Philipp. i. 8 : 1 Thess. ii. 5.—What is here forbidden, must be rash, needless, and irreverent swearing, to which the Jews in the time of our LORD, (like the common people at the present day among ourselves,) must have been singularly addicted.

To these words of CHRIST, St. James refers in his Epistle (v. 12), when he says,—"But above all things, my brethren, swear not ; neither by Heaven, neither by the Earth, neither by any other oath : but let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay ; lest ye fall into condemnation."

And this, they were not to do "*at all*." They were not to look upon some oaths as more binding than others ; but to learn that *all* causeless swearing was offensive in the eyes of Him with whom they had to do,—since *every* oath alike is an invocation of God's presence.

38 Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth :

These words are found in Exod. xxi. 24, Lev. xxiv. 20, and Deut. xix. 21. An injured man was thereby permitted to inflict exactly as much injury as he had received,—*but no more*.

39 But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil :

Of old, as we have seen, there had been a precept forbidding men to inflict *unequal* retaliation ; but our LORD (who came "to fulfill the Law") *(u)* forbids men to retaliate *at all* : whereby, certainly, the object of the ancient precept was most effectually secured. His prohibition, (as an old writer observes,) "cuts off the *beginnings* of sin. The Law corrected faults ;—but the Gospel removes the *occasion* of them."

(s) St. Matt. xxiii. 9.

(t) St. Matt. xxiv. 64.

(u) St. Matt. v. 17.

40, 41. but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take thy coat, let him have *thy* cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Concerning the spirit in which all these remarkable commands are to be taken, see the note on ver. 37.—The attentive reader of the Gospel will remember how the Saviour of the World, at different times, fulfilled every precept which He has here delivered; thus enforcing His own words by His own Divine example. But it should be well observed that it was in their *spirit*, not in their *letter*, that He fulfilled them. Thus, although “He gave His back to the smiters,” (as the Prophet Isaiah had foretold of Him long before, (l. 6,) yet, instead of courting the malice of one of the officers, (for example,) when he struck Him with the palm of his hand, we find the language of mild remonstrance on our Saviour’s lips:—“If I have spoken evil, bear witness of the evil; but if well, why smitest thou Me?”(x) Now, there can be no doubt, that the acts of the Redeemer are the best commentary on His spoken words.

In like manner, when Ananias, the High-Priest, commanded that St. Paul should be smitten on the mouth, the Apostle simply denounced a fearful prophecy against him,(y)—which moreover was strictly fulfilled. Now, it is obviously fair to presume that the lives of our Lord’s greatest Saints may be taken, in some degree, as a living commentary upon the precepts which they were commissioned to deliver.

As regards Lawsuits, again, (see ver. 40,) it will be remembered that the HOLY SPIRIT in another place expressly allows of them, so that they be conducted before the Brethren.(z) And, as some one has piously remarked, Men who would injure their neighbors must be resisted, lest, by those very actions, they should prove the ruin of themselves. See the note on ver. 42.

42 Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.

This must be because we are Stewards only,—not Lords, of the wealth we call *ours*. We are but the channels of God’s bounties. Nothing can *really* belong to us, since *we* belong to God.

But neither will this precept, any more than the preceding ones, bear taking in its very letter; or the foundations of Society would be overthrown, and we should be narrowing, not rising to, the largeness of the Divine requirement. Nor may the precept be interpreted exclusively of money; or it would be addressed only to a section of mankind. See the note on ver. 37.

The only certain saying of “the LORD JESUS” which has been preserved to us, not recorded in the Gospels,(a) may be called to memory in connection with ver. 42.

By all these injunctions, then, *the inner* rather than *the outer man*, is schooled to holiness and virtue. The blow may be warded off,—nay, it may be right to punish the man that dealt it: yet may the injured person, inwardly, turn the other cheek to the offender, and grieve but for *his* sake. The action at Law may be defended, in that spirit of Love which, while it sets the well-being of Society above its own private ease and quiet, would willingly,—if it dared,—withdraw its claim to the contested prize. The violent man may be resisted, if he oversteps his commission; yet may the heart be unconscious, all the while, of strife. Lastly,—Love may compel us to withhold many a gift,—to refuse many a prayer,—to be firm against many an appeal. . . . “And who is sufficient for these things?”

Consider in connection with these last remarks, the tears of CHRIST over Jerusalem,(b)—at the very time that His avenging sword was drawn against the city. And, to compare small things with great, Joseph’s *tears*,—even while he *bound* Simeon.(c)

But it may not be forgotten that this new spiritual code,—or rather, this spiritual exposition of the ancient Mosaic Law,—though popularly spoken of, as peculiar to the days of the Gospel,—is to be met with, in all its essential features, in the

(x) St. John xviii. 23.

(y) Acts xxiii. 2. 3.

(z) 1 Cor. vi. 1—6.

(a) Acts xx. 35. Remember the words of the LORD JESUS, how He said, “It is more blessed to give than to receive.”

(b) St. Luke xix. 41.

(c) Genesis xlii. 24.

Scriptures of the Old Testament. CHRIST came, indeed, not to destroy the Law, but “to fulfill” it: and we have seen, in verses 22, 28, 34, 39, 44, *how* the Law is to be fulfilled. But, to as many as had “ears to hear,” this, the *true* method of fulfilling “the letter” in “the spirit,”^(d) had been abundantly pointed out “to them of old time.” Thus, in Deut. x. 16, the great Lawgiver will be found to have already made Circumcision a *spiritual* ordinance. Consider also Deut. v. 21, vi. 5; and viii. 3. Also Exodus xxiii. 4, 5; and Proverbs xxv. 21. And so, in a multitude of other places.

43 Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy.

The first half of this command is found in Levit. xix. 18:—the latter clause being the wicked addition of the Pharisees. This was indeed “teaching for doctrines the commandments of men;” and “making the commandment of God of none effect by their tradition.” Matt. xv. 9, 6. Compare Mark vii. 1–13.

In a certain sense, however, it may be thought, that to hate our *Enemies*, is a precept quite in accordance with the spirit of the Old Testament Scriptures.^(e) But then, it is only as directed against the *Enemies of God*, that such a sentiment can be allowable: hatred therefore, *not of Men*, but of *Sin in Men*,—and to this, the Gospel itself is no stranger: see what is said of the loud cry of the soul under the Altar, in Revelation vi. 9. Between *this* sentiment, and words of tenderest love, (see the next verse,) there is no contradiction whatever. Thus, on one occasion, our SAVIOUR was unspeakably gracious to one who had “had five husbands,”—and was then living with one who was “not her husband.”^(f) On another occasion, He spoke words of encouragement to a poor penitent, who had yet been a notorious “sinner.”^(g) The woman “taken in adultery,”^(h) was dealt with by the Holy One in this same spirit of compassionate love. There was no indifference to Sin, in any of these cases: God forbid! (“To destroy the works of the Devil,” was the special *purpose* for which the Son of God was manifested.)⁽ⁱ⁾ But there was love, unbounded love, towards *Man*. There was the knowledge also, that the victory over Sin, and a renewal of Righteousness, would be best achieved by adopting the way of Mercy. See note on St. Luke xv. 3.

44 But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them that despitefully use you, and persecute you;

As was before remarked, (in the note on ver. 41,) our Saviour recommended to us all these lovely precepts by His own most holy example.^(k) Nay, it had been foreseen by the keen glance of Prophecy, long before, that He would do so. See the concluding words of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. David displayed towards Saul the temper here enjoined:^(l)—and the first Martyr, Saint Stephen, in like manner, prayed for his murderers.^(m) This seems to have the spirit of Moses,⁽ⁿ⁾ and of the Apostle of the Gentiles.^(o)

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for He maketh His sun

“His Sun!”—the Sun which, on “the fourth day,” He created:—which His Almighty Hands clad with a mantle of Light:—and which He stationed in the visible Heavens to be an emblem of Himself! See Psalm xix. 5, 6.

to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

(d) 2 Cor. iii. 6.

(e) See Deut. vii. 2–5; xxiii. 6; xxv. 17–19; 1 Sam. xv. 2, 3. So also throughout the Book of Psalms; e. g. cxxxvii. 7–9.

(f) St. John iv. 16–18.

(g) St. Luke vii. 37, &c.

(h) St. John viii. 3–11.

(i) 1 St. John iii. 8.

(k) St. Luke xxiii. 34.

(l) 1 Samuel xxiv. 17, and xxvi. 21.

(m) Acts vii. 60.

(n) Exod. xxxii. 32.

(o) Rom. ix. 3.

It will be a new thought to many, that the Rain and the Sunshine,—descending upon the fields of the just and the unjust alike,—are an argument of God's long-suffering Patience, and unwearied Kindness and impartial Love.

We have great need to be thus reminded of those common mercies which are poured out impartially upon all; and which fail to strike us, simply *because* they are common mercies.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?

That is,—What reward can you hope to receive at the hands of your Father which is in Heaven? See St. Matthew vi. 1.

Do not even the Publicans the same?

See the parallel place in St. Luke vi. 32, and the note on St. Mark ii. 15.

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the Publicans so?

To return evil for good, is the act of devils,—the work of those who are lowest of all, in the scale. To return evil for evil, and good for good, (verses 38, 43, 46, 47,) is but low morality,—the act of our fallen Human Nature. But to return good for evil,—or rather, *to do good to all*,—is Divine; and this is the course which our Blessed Lord here enjoins upon us.

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect.

A wondrous injunction, truly; and one with which, at first sight, compliance is simply impossible: but it evidently amounts to a requirement that we should live up to the utmost "perfection" (*p*) of which *our renewed Nature* is capable,—even as the ALMIGHTY hath existed, from all Eternity, in the perfection of *His*. And as we ever trace some resemblance to the Sire in the form and features of the Son, so may we well expect to recognize in the spiritual offspring of God, (*q*) the likeness of Him who begat them. (*r*)

It is well that the division of the Chapter was made in this place; in order that the savour of so lofty a command might remain on the heart, and linger in the memory, of him who readeth.

THE PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY LORD, and everlasting GOD, vouchsafe, we beseech Thee, to direct, sanctify, and govern, both our hearts and bodies in the ways of Thy Laws, and in the works of Thy Commandments; that through Thy most mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preserved in Body and Soul, through our LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST. Amen.

(*p*) See Genesis vi. 9; xvii. 1; Job i. 1. (*q*) Acts xvii. 28. (*r*) St. James i. 18.

CHAPTER VI.

1 CHRIST continueth His Sermon in the Mount, speaking of Alms. 5 Prayer. 14 Forgiving our brethren. 16 Fasting. 19 Where our treasure is to be laid up. 24 Of serving God and Mammon. 25 Exhorteth not to be careful for worldly things, 33 but to seek God's Kingdom.

HITHERTO, our LORD has been putting His own Divine Interpretation on six commands of the Law,—“It was said,” “But I say:” ch. v. verses 21, 27, 31, 33, 38, 43. The “Sermon on the Mount” proceeds with certain directions concerning Almsgiving, (ver. 1 to 4).—Prayer, (ver. 5 to 15).—and Fasting, (ver. 16 to 18): which are, respectively, the dedication of our Substance,—of our Souls,—and of our Bodies, to GOD. And it is observable that our Blessed SAVIOUR, assuming each Duty as something known and admitted, dwells only on *the manner* in which each is to be performed.

First, then, concerning Almsgiving:—

1 Take heed that ye do not your alms before men, to be seen of them:

It was commanded in the former chapter (v. 16), “Let your light so shine before men; *that they may see your good works.*” But there is no contradiction between that place, and this: for what was there commanded, was, that by the shining of the light, *our works*, not *ourselves*, should become conspicuous: and that men should be thereby led to glorify, not *us*, but *our Father* which is in Heaven. In like manner, what is here condemned, is, not that Alms should be done before men; but that human observation should be *the motive* of such almsgiving:—“before men,—*to be seen of them.*”

Verily, the caution is needed, even by the best; for it is marvellous how prone we are to be influenced by unworthy motives, even though the glory of God may be the *chief* object proposed to ourselves in all that we do. The love of Praise, moreover, is an instinct which we derive from God: and to desire the good opinion of our fellow men,—is in itself right. To these instincts our SAVIOUR CHRIST more than once appeals: see St. Luke xiv. 9, 10; also ver. 29. And all this, (which makes the greatness of our trial,) may in part explain why our SAVIOUR dwells at so much length, (verses 1 to 18), on the duty of bestowing Alms,—of Praying,—and of Fasting,—with a single eye to “our FATHER which is in Heaven.”

otherwise ye have no reward of your FATHER which is in Heaven.

That which is expressly stated in ver. 4, is here as plainly implied: namely, that he who acts in a contrary spirit, shall certainly reap a heavenly reward.^(a)

2 Therefore when thou doest *thine* alms, do not sound a trumpet

(a) St. Matt. x. 42. Compare Proverbs xix. 17 with St. Matt. xxv. 40. See also Proverbs xxviii. 27: Ecclesiastes xi.: Hebrews vi. 10.

before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, that they may have glory of men.

The picture in this verse,—as well as in verses 5 and 16,—of what was common in our LORD'S time, reveals in a very striking manner the degraded state of religious feeling,—the moral blindness which had befallen the Jewish people. Many similar hints are supplied in other places of the Gospel: as in St. Matthew xxiii. 2 to 33: St. Mark vii. 6 to 13: St. Luke xi. 37 to 54: xviii. 10 to 12, &c.

And yet, let us beware how we make such remarks in a spirit of self-congratulation: for, (as a good man observes of ourselves,) “When we *do* give, how much of self and how little of God is there in it! The left hand knows what is done: yea, it is done with the left hand,—done, that is, with sinister respects and intentions,—although the bodily right hand does it.”

Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

They who do such things, “*have* their reward;” that is, they have received already all the reward they ever *will* receive: namely, the observation of men. Compare, for the expression, St. Luke vi. 24. It recurs in verses 5 and 16.

3 But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth:

To fulfill this precept in the letter, is obviously impossible; for “the left hand” must, perforce, know what is done by “the right hand.” Yet, herein lies the very fitness and beauty of the image. It is equally impossible for a man to keep from himself the knowledge of his own deeds.

By this expression, however, we are forcibly taught in what spirit all our best actions should be performed. We must not only shun the applause of others: we must shun even our own. To effect this, He who “knew what was in man” knew that it would be needful to keep from us, if it were possible, the very consciousness of what we had ourselves been about.

“An excellent word!” exclaims pious Leighton; “Reflect not on it as thy action, with self-pleasing: for *that* is the ‘left hand’ in view. But look on God’s goodness to thee, in not having placed thee in the Receiver’s room and *he* in *thine*: in making thee able to relieve another, which many are not; and, being able, making thee willing, which far fewer are. Take thy very giving to thy distressed brother, as a gift from God, and a further obligation on thee. Though *He* is pleased to become thy debtor, yet truly the thing itself is *His* gift, and a great one,—as David acknowledges excellently, concerning the offerings to the temple:—‘But who am I, and what is my people *that we should be able to offer so willingly*, after this sort? For all things come of Thee, and of Thine own have we given Thee.’^(b) Not only the power, but the will, is from God:” and with respect to *both*, the King and his people had but given God of *His own*.

that thine alms may be in secret:

It can scarcely be necessary to add the remark, that the point of these directions concerning Almsgiving is *not* that it should “be in secret;” but that it should be done to *GOD’S glory*,—with a single eye to *His* praise. Such Almsgiving will, doubtless, commonly be secret; but it will not lose its character because it may happen to be done in the full light of day, and where it is sure to attract observation.

“When it must be public,” says Leighton, “let thy intention be secret. Take no delight in having the eyes of men on thee; yea, rather count it a pain,—and still eye God alone, for *He* eyes thee.”

and thy FATHER which seeth in secret,

“Remember,” (continues the same holy man,) “even in public acts of charity, and other such like, *He sees in secret*. Though the action be no secret, the spring,

(b) 1 Chron. xxix. 14.

the source of it, is; and He still looks upon *that*: He sees by *what weights the wheels go*; views thy heart, the hidden bent and intention of it, which man cannot see. So then, though, in some cases, it is necessary to be seen in order to do,—yet, in no case, do, in order to be seen.”

Himself shall reward thee openly.

Or, as it is elsewhere expressed,—“Thou shalt be recompensed at the Resurrection of the Just.”(c) See the last note on ver. 1.

A caution follows on the subject of Prayer: and in ver. 6, certain directions concerning *Private* Prayer.

5 And when thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites *are*: for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets, that they may be seen of men. Verily I say unto you, they have their reward.

As before remarked, (see note on ver. 1), it is not the praying in the Synagogues, or in the streets, which our Lord here condemns; but the hypocrisy of so praying in order to “*be seen of men*.” Consider the behaviour of the Pharisee, in the Parable: (St. Luke xviii. 10 to 12,) also the language of our Lord, as recorded by St. Matthew xxiii. 5.—See above, the notes on ver. 2.

6 But thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy FATHER which is in secret;

“*When thou hast shut thy door*.” To such minuteness of detail does the Lord of Heaven and Earth condescend! What shall we venture to call a trifle, if so small an act as this does not escape His notice,—nay, is put forward by Him, almost as the condition of prevailing Prayer?

The door should be more than “shut.” Our Lord says “locked.” See the last words of the note on St. Luke xi. 7.

and thy FATHER which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

These words are found in ver. 4, (where, see the note;) and will recur in ver. 18.

7 But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen *do*: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

“Much Speaking,” which our SAVIOUR here condemns, is not the same thing as *much Praying*. This, He recommended to us by His precept, when “He spake a Parable to this end, that men ought always to pray, and not to faint:”(d) and enforced His own Divine example, when He “continued *all night* in prayer to God.”(e) It is rather, the employment of many irreverent and useless words in our approaches to the throne of Grace. We have an example of the “heathen” practice in this respect, in 1 Kings xviii. 26 to 29; where it is related that “the Priests of Baal called upon the name of Baal from morning to noon, saying, O Baal hear us!”

Holy Scripture does indeed contain examples of very lengthy prayers,—as in 1 Kings viii. and 2 Chronicles vi.: Nehemiah ix.: Daniel ix.: St. John xvii.: but these were offered up on extraordinary occasions. On the other hand, the Lord’s Prayer,—“*after which manner*” we are instructed to pray,—is exceedingly brief. Briefer still, is the pattern of prevailing prayer in St. Luke xviii. 13: and such was the prayer of our SAVIOUR Himself in the garden,—a prayer, moreover, which he repeated (not “vainly”) three times.(f) Consider, again, the character of those Prayers which were answered by displays of miraculous power: “Lord, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.”(g)—“Lord, I am not worthy that Thou shouldst come under my roof; but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.”(h)

(c) St. Luke xiv. 14.

(d) St. Luke xviii. 1.

(e) St. Luke vi. 12.

(f) St. Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44.

(g) St. Matthew viii. 2

(h) St. Matthew viii. 8.

"JESUS, Thou Son of David, have mercy on me!"(i)—"LORD, that I may receive my sight,"(k)—And the like. Such, too, are all the fragmentary portions which survive, of the primitive services of the Church: and our Collects are all constructed in the same spirit of severe brevity. The holy men by whom they were compiled must have been deeply impressed with the pious sentiment adopted by Hooker from the Book of Ecclesiastes (v. 2):—"He is above, and we upon Earth; therefore it behooveth our words to be wary and few."

One of the moderns has well remarked,—“If the heart is close to Him in ever so short a prayer, there is much said in a little. We usually speak many words, and say little.”

8 Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your FATHER knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask Him.

We do not pray, in order to inform God of our needs; but in order to entreat Him to supply them. See the Collect, beginning “Almighty God, the fountain of all Wisdom,”—at the end of the Communion Service.

But, (it may be thought,) If God “knows our necessities before we ask.”—what can be the necessity of asking?—We answer, first, That *it is the Divine Will* that we should Ask, in order that it may be Given,—Seek, in order that we may find,—Knock, in order that it may be Opened:(l) and this reply should be final. The Vessel must be brought to the Fountain in order that it may be filled. . . . But secondly, it should be remembered that the limit to the bestowal of God's mercies is created not by His unwillingness to bestow, but by *our* inability to receive. The miraculous supply of Oil “stayed” not, until that confession of the Widow's son, “There is not a vessel more.”(m) By Prayer, our hearts become enlarged for the reception of the Divine Gift. That turning of the Heart to God prepares and fits us for the Blessing which He is ever prepared to bestow, but which we are not always prepared to receive.

9 After this manner therefore pray ye:

Our Blessed LORD delivered to His Disciples the Prayer which follows, also on another occasion: in compliance, namely, with their request that He would “Teach them how to pray.”(n) He prefaced it, then, by the injunction,—“when ye pray, say:” thereby bestowing His sanction, for ever, on *set forms of Prayer*. On this occasion, the LORD's Prayer is introduced by the words,—“*After this manner* pray ye.” The LORD's Prayer is, accordingly, at once the most frequent of all our prayers; and the pattern on which the others are constructed. See the end of the note on ver. 7.

Our FATHER

By “the Spirit of Adoption,”(o) “because we are sons,”(p) we address God as “Our Father:” for, to as many as believe, “giveth He power to become the sons of God.”(q) “Of His own will begat He us,” says St. James (i. 18); us men, “which are made after the similitude of God.”(r)

“Our:” although the prayer is to be said in the closet, privately. This must be, because “we, being many, are one body in CHRIST, and every one members one of another.”(s)

which art in Heaven,

For *He* alone is properly the FATHER of all,—as our SAVIOUR hath expressly taught us: “One is your FATHER, which is in Heaven.”(t) The compassionate Love which authorized us to draw near to such a presence with words inspiring confidence and affection,—it is impossible sufficiently to admire.

(i) St. Luke xviii. 38.

(k) St. Luke xviii. 41.

(l) St. Matthew vii. 7, 8.

(m) 2 Kings iv. 6.

(n) St. Luke xi. 2.

(o) Rom. viii. 15.

(p) Gal. iv. 6.

(q) St. John i. 12.

(r) St. James iii. 9, and compare 1 St. John iii. 1, 2, and Galatians iii. 26.

(s) Romans xii. 5.

(t) St. Matthew xxiii. 9.

But it is a relation which implies corresponding duties on our side:—"If I then be a Father,"—saith the LORD, by His prophet Malachi,—(i. 6,) "where is Mine honour?"

"Which art in *Heaven*;" because it is especially *there* that He manifests His glory. But "behold, the Heaven, and the Heaven of Heavens, cannot contain" Him.(v) Consider Psalm cxiii. 6.

Hallowed be Thy Name.

This, since it is the first petition in the LORD's Prayer, expresses what should be the foremost anxiety of every Christian heart,—namely, the honor of God's Holy Name. By such language, we stand pledged to hallow it ourselves; "not only with our lips, but in our lives."

10 Thy Kingdom come.

"The child of God," being also "an heir of the Kingdom of Heaven," is impatient for the coming of that Kingdom. "Beseeching Thee," (as it is said in the Burial Service,) "that it may please Thee, of Thy gracious goodness, shortly to accomplish the number of Thine elect, and to hasten Thy Kingdom." But "what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness,"(x) who say such words as these?

We pray here for the establishment of CHRIST's Kingdom; and not only that we ourselves may have our place in it, but that the same Kingdom may have a place also in ourselves.(y)

Thy Will be done

This entire petition may be understood as marking anxiety on the part of the Creature, to behold universal obedience to the Creator's Will; or rather, to behold the conformity of all other wills to His. See the note on the same petition in St. Luke xi. 2. But this former clause is especially the language of personal submission; of humble and entire acquiescence in the decrees of a higher Power. See St. Luke xxii. 42, and Acts xxi. 14.

It may be regarded, moreover, as a prayer for guidance: a prayer that God would "direct our steps according to His Word:"(z)—and that "the words of our mouth, and the meditation of our heart may be alway acceptable in His sight,"—who is "our Strength and our Redeemer."(a)

in Earth, as *it is* in Heaven.

This latter clause is applicable to each of the three petitions which go before. The Holy Name,—the Heavenly Kingdom,—the Divine Will;—to be perfectly hallowed,—to have fully come,—to be entirely obeyed;—every thing must be "*in Earth, as it is in Heaven.*" The words themselves reveal, incidentally, the order which must reign in the Courts above,—where, in all respects, as the Saviour here assures us, the FATHER's will is done. . . . As Hooker lay a-dying, one of his friends inquired his present thoughts: to whom he replied,—"*That he was meditating the number and nature of Angels, and their blessed obedience and order; without which peace could not be in Heaven: and, oh that it might be so on Earth!*"

11 Give us this day

Whereby our LORD teaches us to "take no thought,"—(that is, to repress in ourselves all undue anxiety,)—"for the morrow."(b) The Christian's anxieties (as we have seen) are already enlisted on behalf of the coming of CHRIST's Kingdom. How shall he then "make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof?"(c)

our daily bread.

(v) 1 Kings viii. 27.

(z) Psalm cxix. 133.

(x) 2 St. Pet. iii. 11.

(a) Ps. xix. 14.

(c) Romans xiii. 14.

(y) St. Luke xvii. 21.

(b) St. Matth. vi. 34.

That is,—“Send us all things that be needful both for our Souls and Bodies;” as will be found more fully explained in the note on St. Luke iv. 4. But we are taught to pray only for the supply of our *daily needs*. Nature is satisfied with little,—says a good man: Grace, with less. “And, having food and raiment, let us be therewith content.”(d)

“Our daily *Bread*,” the simplest fare! And no promise is ever held out to us of more. “Trust in the LORD, and do good; so shalt thou dwell in the land, and verily—*thou shalt be fed*.”(e)

For more than this, Agur prayed not, when he said,—“Give me neither Poverty nor Riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny Thee, and say, Who is the LORD? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain.”(f)

Observe, however, that this is not only a prayer for food and raiment; but also a prayer that our food and raiment may be of *GOD'S* giving,—that is, may be honestly and fairly earned. “For,” as an old writer remarks, “to him God gives bread, who earns it by righteous means; but to him who earns it by sin, the Devil it is who giveth.”

Indeed, the bread which is unfairly obtained, is not truly *ours*, but another man's. Neither can those supplies be fairly regarded as our own, of which a share should be distributed to him that needeth.(g)

The richer sort of persons find it hard to realize the belief that their daily food comes from God; and so, may feel as if this petition were out of place on their lips. Such persons should be reminded, that, by saying,—“Give us this day *our* daily bread,” they do in effect say,—“Give *Thou* to us this day, the bread which belongs to us.” As if their language were,—“Let the bread which is ours, come to us this day *sanctified by Thy Almighty Hands!*”

But we must look for a yet deeper meaning in this petition,—as will be more fully shown in the note on St. Luke iv. 4. “Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?”(h) Wherefore, in the words of our Saviour CHRIST,—“Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God, and His Righteousness; and all these things,”—that is, all that is required, for your temporal support and welfare,—“shall be added unto you.”(i)

12 And forgive us our debts,

“Debts,” in this place, is clearly equivalent to “trespasses” in ver. 14,—with which word we are more familiar. The expression informs us of the relation in which we stand to God: reminds us, that we are under *an obligation* to fulfill His commands. Hence the Parable which sets forth the duty of Forgiveness of Injuries, relates the History of two *Creditors*:(j) and of kindred application is the Parable of “a certain Creditor which had two *Debtors*.”(k)

With the present place, the language of St. Luke xi. 4, should be compared; and it will be seen that the word translated “sinners” in St. Luke xiii. 4, is rendered “*Debtors*,” in the margin.

In this fifth petition, then, we pray for daily remission, daily cleansing, daily renewal: admitting by this, our daily sacrifice of Prayer, the self-same thing which was anciently witnessed by the Daily Sacrifice of a victim by the High-priest,—“first for his own sins, and then for the people's.”(l)

For “there is none that doeth good, no not one.”(m) We fall into sin, daily; and the sum of those many little sins, makes a large amount in the end. “They are more in number than the hairs of my head,”—as the Psalmist speaks; “they have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up!”(n)

as we forgive our debtors.

The mercy we show towards others, is here proposed by ourselves as the measure of the mercy we desire to experience at God's Hands. So strictly do we stand

(d) 1 Tim. vi. 8.

(e) Psalm xxxvii. 3.

(f) Proverbs xxx 8, 9.

(g) Ephes. iv. 28.

(h) St. Matth. vi. 25.

(i) St. Matth. vi. 33.

(j) St. Matth. xviii. 23 to 35.

(k) St. Luke vii. 41.

(l) Hebrews vii. 27: referring to Levit. xvi. 11 and 15.

(m) Psalm xiv. 3, quoted in Romans iii. 10 and 12.

(n) Psalm xl. 13.

bound, and pledged, to show forgiveness to other men! For, on this condition only, do we presume to ask forgiveness for ourselves.

This petition, then, becomes a terrible one on the lips of the implacable man,—for thereby he closes the Gate of Mercy against himself; and declares his own dreadful sentence.

And here, by the way, the plain and obvious meaning of the plea urged, is not to be lost sight of. Mercifulness with respect to *debts of money* is, of course, to be understood, where the language of pecuniary obligation is so distinctly employed.

See the notes on verses 14 and 15.

13 And lead us not into Temptation.

This is not, of course, a prayer that God will not “tempt” us, by solicitations to sin; for in *that* sense “God tempteth no man,” as St. James declares.^(a) But it is a prayer that we may not “be led” into circumstances of Trial; in which sense “God tempted Abraham,”^(p) and indeed tempts all His Saints. The meaning of the petition therefore is, humbly to deprecate that *trial should be made* of our constancy; and this, because it but too commonly happens that for men to be tempted, is for men to fall. “Considering thyself, lest thou also—*be tempted*,” writes the Apostle.^(q) And so, our Blessed SAVIOUR, on more than one occasion, said to His disciples,—“Watch and pray that ye enter not *into Temptation*.”^(r)

But St. James says, “My brethren, count it *all joy* when ye fall into divers temptations.”^(s) These passages, however, are easily reconciled. We may not *seek* Temptation. The weakness of the Flesh, as already remarked, should teach us even to dread it. But when, in the course of God’s good Providence, and the pursuit of our known duty, we find ourselves involved in circumstances of trial, then we are taught to “count it all joy;” for then, it may be humbly hoped that the Tempter beholds in us that living principle of earnestness which it is the whole business of himself and his accursed emissaries to assail, and if possible to destroy. Persons so “*led into Temptation*,” are “*led by the SPIRIT*.”^(t) As we learn from the example of our glorified Head; and, as members of His mystical Body, we may humbly hope to be continually supported by His Spirit through the conflict; as well as to be crowned with victory, after His glorious pattern, in the end.

But deliver us from Evil:

Whether from within, or from without:—from the evil of our own hearts,^(u) or from the evil suggestions of the Enemy,^(x) and his Angels.^(y) It is in fact a prayer that “from all Evil, and Mischief: from Sin: from the crafts and assaults of the Devil: from God’s wrath, and from Everlasting Damnation, from all Blindness of heart: from Pride, Vain-glory, and Hypocrisy: from Envy, Hatred, and Malice, and all Uncharitableness: from Fornication, and all other deadly sin: and from all the deceits of the World, the Flesh, and the Devil,—the good Lord would deliver us.”

As, in the former petition, we prayed unto God that it would please Him “to save and defend us in all dangers, ghostly and bodily;” so, in this, we implore Him “to keep us from all sin and wickedness, and from our Ghostly Enemy, and from Everlasting Death.”

In this broad manner we are content to take this great petition; though learned men are of opinion that, in the strict letter, the words should be interpreted,—“Deliver us from the *Evil One*!”^(z) and they are probably right. The Reader is referred to the note on St. Luke iv. 6.

See what has been remarked on this petition in the corresponding place of St. Luke’s Gospel (ch. xi. 4); and note, that those many expressions in the Psalms, which speak of Enemies, and pray for Victory or Deliverance,^(a) may be considered, in their spiritual meaning, to look in the direction of the present petition. On Christian lips, they convey a desire akin to that here expressed.

(a) St. James i. 13.

(p) Genesis xxii. 1.

(q) Galat. vi. 1.

(r) St. Matthew xxvi. 41. St. Luke xxii. 40 and 46.

(s) St. James i. 2.

(t) St. Matthew iv. 1, &c.

(u) Romans vii. 23. St. James i. 14.

(x) 2 Cor. ii. 11; 1 St. Peter v. 8.

(y) Ephes. vi. 12.

(z) The same remark applies to St. Matt. v. 37, and to 1 St. John v. 19.

(a) Psalm liv. 5; lix. 1, 10; cxliii. 12, &c., &c.

For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, for ever.

For the Kingdom we pray for, is Thine:—Thine, also, is the Power to bestow every blessing of which we stand in need:—and Thine, Thine only, be the Glory! . . . The same language is found in 1 Chron. xxix. 11,—which see.

Amen.

By the word 'Amen,' we set our seal to every petition which has gone before. The word implies devout assent, *(b)*—or earnest desire, *(c)*—as in this place: hearty belief,—or solemn confirmation, *(d)*—as at the end of the Creed. It is often translated "Verily,"—as in verses 2, 5, and 16, of the present chapter: and is personally applied to CHRIST Himself, in the Book of Revelation,—iii. 14.

Such, then, is the Prayer which the LORD hath taught us; and which He twice repeated,—as if in token that it is a perfect summary of all our actual needs; an enumeration of all our lawful desires. Thus we are "to say;" *(e)* or "after this manner." *(f)* No petition, therefore, should be offered up to the Majesty on High, which cannot be fairly brought under one of these seven heads. Indeed the very desires which fall not within the compass of one of these petitions, may be pronounced unlawful.

14, 15 For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your Heavenly FATHER will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your FATHER forgive your trespasses.

It seems worth remarking that the petition,—“Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us,” is the only portion of the LORD'S Prayer for which no parallel has been traced out in the prayers of God's ancient People. For every other petition, some corresponding one has been discovered; which leads to the interesting belief, that, on this occasion, our SAVIOUR did but put together materials with which His hearers were, for the most part, familiar. But in respect of the petition which pleads for Mercy, by promising to be merciful in turn, He is found to have been “like unto a man that is a Householder; which bringeth forth out of his Treasure things *new*,” as well as “old.” *(g)* And this may be the reason why it is the only petition to which the Blessed Speaker recurs: the one He singles out from the rest for the solemn yet simple comment, contained in these two verses.

16 Moreover when ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites, of a sad countenance: for they disfigure their faces, that they may appear unto men to fast. Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.

Having considered the duty of Almsgiving, and Prayer, our Lord proceeds to the duty of Fasting: for *a duty must that* be which is spoken of, as Fasting is, in ver. 17.—Compare verses 2 and 5, and the notes thereon.

“Prayer” and “Fasting” are frequently joined together by the SPIRIT: as in the following places of Holy Scripture:—Psalm xxxv. 13: Daniel ix. 3: St. Matthew xvii. 21 (St. Mark ix. 29): St. Luke ii. 37: Acts xiv. 23: 1 Cor. vii. 5. “Prayers” and “Alms” are conjoined in Acts x. 4.

17 But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face;

Our LORD alludes, specially, to the manners and fashion of His own time. But His words teach us that whatever of usual outward observance cannot be neglected without attracting undue notice, must continue to be practised, during seasons of Fasting.

18 That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy FATHER

(b) 1 Corinth. xiv. 16: Deut. xxvii. 15, &c. *(c)* Jeremiah xi. 5 xxviii. 6. Nehemiah viii. 6.
(d) 1 Kings i. 36. Numb. v. 22. *(e)* St. Luke xi. 2. *(f)* St. Matt. vi. 9.
(g) St. Matthew xiii. 52.

which is in secret: and thy FATHER which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

With this verse, compare verses 4 and 6. The precept concerning Fasting, like those concerning Almsgiving and Prayer, regards *Purity of Intention*: a caution the more necessary, inasmuch as mortifications and austerities seem to have nothing to do with Pride. But Pride may lurk in sackcloth; and it is more formidable, from that very circumstance, than when it comes abroad arrayed in finery.

It is obvious that, in many other ways besides this, "Fasting" may be "made of none effect":—as, when it is not attended with purity of life; when it is made to consist in a mere varying of food,—not an abridgment of meat and drink; or when we practise simplicity at our tables, in order thereby to save the more,—not for CHRIST'S POOR, but *for ourselves*. But we may be sure that our LORD has here laid His finger on the most dangerous deceit of any: the snare which most effectually renders our good works worthless in His sight.

On "seeing in secret," see above, the note on ver. 4.

19 Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon Earth.

As our LORD recurred, at the end of His pattern-prayer (ver. 14), to one of the petitions which had gone before (ver. 12,)—so here does He recur, if not to Almsgiving, (of which he had spoken in verses 1 to 4,) at least to a topic close akin to it,—namely, the Vice to which it stands opposed. Indeed, He has been thought, in this and the following verses, to *recommend Almsgiving*; and certainly there are parallel expressions in St. Luke's Gospel, which favour the opinion: see St. Luke xii. 33, 34. Moreover, there can be no surer way of depositing one's goods in safety than by placing them in the hand of Him who, (in the person of His poor,) stretches out His hand to receive them. "He that hath pity upon the poor, *lendeth unto the Lord*," said the wise man: "and that which he hath given, *will He pay him again*." (h)—"Give to the poor, and—*thou shalt have treasure in Heaven*," (i) was the language of our LORD Himself, on a certain occasion. But to interpret this passage of Almsgiving, *only*, is perhaps to take too narrow a view of our SAVIOUR'S wondrous words: which are rather a warning against Covetousness,—verses 19 to 24; and a caution against undue Anxiety about the things of this life, verses 25 to the end.

It may be admitted, however, that the preceding verse, and those which follow, grow naturally out of the subject treated of at the beginning of the present Chapter, and stand in the closest connection with it: as though the object of the Blessed Speaker had been to remove the chief impediment to the free bestowal of our worldly goods,—namely, the lust to heap up a fortune.

where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal:

As though he said,—Why lay up thy treasure here, where thou thyself fleest as it were a shadow, and never continuest in one stay? where, even before thou thyself departest, the thief may rob thee of it in a moment; where, though spared by him, the moth will destroy it; where, lastly, every thing thou lovest contains within itself the principles of decay?

"They that trust in their wealth, and boast themselves in the multitude of their riches," were of old reminded that they must "perish and *leave their wealth to others*." (k) "Surely," (it was said) "men are disquieted in vain. He heapeth up riches and *knoweth not who shall gather them*." (l) But, more solemn, by far, is our SAVIOUR'S warning: more prevailing by far the motive which He suggests. Compare the note on St. Matthew vii. 1.

20 But lay up for yourselves treasure in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal.

(h) Proverbs xix. 17.

(k) Psalm xlix. 6 and 10.

(i) St. Matt. xix. 21: St. Mark x. 21: St. Luke xviii. 22.

(l) Psalm xxxix. 6. Compare Ecclesiastes ii. 18.

O wondrous Love, which would not deprive us even of these, His lower gifts: but would teach us to bestow them, where we may find them, after many days! O yet more wondrous skill, which can provide a means whereby the perishable things of earth may be conveyed away, and deposited in the eternal Mansions!

That we ourselves have here no abiding city, we know: that we look for a House, eternal in the heavens,^(m) we admit. Why are we so loath, then, to send our goods on before us,—our treasures,—whatsoever they may happen to be? He who is the Author and Giver of all good things, offers to become the Guardian and Keeper of them also. How does it happen that so few have the heart to *trust Him*? What does He, in this place, but advise us to transfer our fruits to a higher floor; where they shall be in no danger of the fate which, here below, is inevitable? “For riches certainly make themselves wings. They fly away as an Eagle.” And wherefore should not their flight be, like the Eagle’s,—*towards Heaven?*”⁽ⁿ⁾

21 For where your treasure is, there will your Heart be also.

This, then, is the reason which our SAVIOUR assigns for the precepts which go immediately before. He desires nothing less than that our hearts should be drawn upwards; that to Heaven, all our thoughts should point: and so, that our conversation should be in Heaven,^(o)—“hid with CHRIST in God.”^(p)

And since our “Treasure,”—of whatever kind it may happen to be,—has this wondrous power of drawing the heart after it, and up to it; *who* sees not that the foregoing precept is of vaster extent than might, at first, be expected? Does it not address the mourner?—reminding him that he has *lost* nothing; that he has but laid up his treasure in a place where he will find it after many days; and that the withdrawal of that which was the delight of his eyes, is but a summons to him to “lift up his heart;”—a warning to him to “set his affection on things above, not on things on the earth?”^(q)

22 The light of the body is the Eye:

Rather,—“The *lamp* of the body.”—Expressions strictly parallel to this verse and the next, are to be found in St. Luke xi. 34; but they will be perceived to stand in quite a different connection, and to have quite a different bearing. How are we thereby reminded of the breadth of application claimed by His words, who spake as never man spake!

Sin enters at *the eye*: compare ch. v. 28, 29,—and the notes there. The organ which was meant to be the avenue of Light to the Body, thereby becomes the channel by which Pollution enters, and darkness abounds. How little are the blind aware of their blessedness!

if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light.

Rather,—“*liberal*,” for *that* is the meaning of “single,” in this place. The connection with what went before, is close and obvious.

23 But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness.

“Evil,” in the sense of “*illiberal*,”—as in St. Matth. xx. 15.—We are hereby assured that nothing so effectually blinds the eye, and thus blocks up the intended avenue of light,—darkening the whole inner man,—as Covetousness.

Consider, in connection with this saying of our LORD, the character and conduct of Judas Iscariot.

If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great *is* that darkness!

That is,—“How great” must “the darkness” be, which is thus deprived of the means of illumination!

(m) 2 Cor. v. 1.

(p) Coloss. iii. 3.

(n) Prov. xxiii. 5.

(q) Coloss. iii. 2.

(o) Philip. iii. 20.

24 No man can serve two masters :

These, and the following words, will be found repeated in St. Luke's Gospel,—xvi. 13: but, as before, (r) in quite a different connection.

for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other.

Our Lord puts two cases,—the one the converse of the other. And observe the exquisite accuracy of the language employed:—For either, (He says,) a man must hate Satan, and love God: or else he must “hold to” Satan,—(who *cannot* become the object of human love;) and “despise” God,—(who *cannot* become the object of human hate). Now, *he* “holds” or “attaches himself, to” Satan, who seeks Satan's rewards: and what does *he* do, who disregards God's threats and promises, but “despise” Him?

Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.

“Mammon” is the Syriac title for “the god of this world:”(s) but, in this place, the name stands for *Lucrè*, generally. The deep meaning concealed in the expression, appears from another place of Scripture; where the Apostle, speaking of “Covetousness,” immediately adds,—“which is *Idolatry*.”(t)

Some persons may be disposed to fancy that an undue space is given to some Sins,—to Covetousness for example,—in the Sermon on the Mount. Any one so thinking, should be reminded that we are, and can only be, *learners*, here. He may be referred, also, to the concluding note on chapter vii. Touching the particular sin of Covetousness, let the History of Balaam, of Achan, and of Gehazi, in the Old Testament; of Judas, of Ananias, and of Sapphira, in the New,—be to us a sufficient warning of our danger. How can a warning against *the sin of Judas*, by possibility, occupy too conspicuous a place in the Gospel of CHRIST?

25 Therefore I say unto you, Take no thought for your Life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your Body, what ye shall put on.

“Take no *thought*,”—does not mean that we are to make no provision. Very far from this, indeed, is implied by the whole tenor of Scripture. St. Paul declares that “if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel.”(u) The “bag” which contained the common fund, whereby the daily need of the Son of Man and His followers was supplied,(x) showed *thought*.

Nor yet is labour forbidden. St. Paul wrought with his own hands;(y) and commanded “that if any would not work, neither should he eat.”(z) “Go to the Ant, thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise,” saith the SPIRIT: “which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, provideth her Meat in the Summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.”(a) The Divine Injunction does but prohibit *distracting anxiety—over-carefulness* about the things of this life.

But if it is forbidden that concerning necessary things,—as meat, and drink, and clothing,—we should feel anxiety; how offensive to Almighty God must engrossing schemes of Ambition, and of Pleasure,—solicitude about Luxuries, or about Trifles—be!

Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment?

Shall not, therefore, He who so curiously built the Body,—and so wondrously endowed it with Life,—provide both for the covering of the one, and the support of the other? Is not the bestowal of the greater gift, an assurance and a pledge that the lesser will not be withheld either?

(r) See the first note, above, on ver. 22.

(t) Coloss. iii. 5.

(x) St. John xii. 6 and xiii. 29.

(z) 2 Thess. iii. 10.

(s) 2 Cor. iv. 4. Compare St. Luke xvi. 9.

(u) 1 Tim. v. 8.

(y) 2 Thess. iii. 8, 9; Acts xviii. 3; xx. 34.

(a) Proverbs vi. 6—8.

26 Behold the Fowls of the air: for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them.

Verily, "The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works!"^(b) The concern of Almighty God for these His lower creatures is apparent from many parts of Scripture. Consider the following places:—Deuteronomy xxii. 6, 7; Leviticus xxii. 28; Exodus xxiii. 19 (repeated, in xxxiv. 26, and Deuteronomy xiv. 21); Deuteronomy xxv. 4; Exodus xxiii. 5, &c.

Are ye not much better than they?

Every hint concerning that great mystery,—the brute Creation,—when it comes from the mouth of the CREATOR Himself, is precious. Compare with this place, St. Matthew xii. 12.

27 Which of you by taking thought can add one cubit unto his stature?

Rather, "unto his term of life." The space traversed in a man's earthly course; length of days,—not altitude of stature,—is the object of solicitude here specified.

28 And why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the Lilies of the field, how they grow;

The Author of Creation turns to another class of His works. He *could* have instanced the gorgeous plumage of birds,—the lovely colours, and the wonderful texture of *their* clothing; but He prefers to descend a step in the scale of Being, and appeal to the world of Flowers.

Hither He invites *our* attention also. The injunction stands for evermore—"Consider the lilies of the field!"

they toil not, neither do they spin:

Neither "toil,"—as men, for the materials of clothing; nor "spin,"—as women, whose office it is to give shape to those materials, and make them fit for use. Consolation is intended for either sex.

29 and yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these.

No Jewish Monarch ever attained to such worldly magnificence as Solomon; who "made silver and gold at Jerusalem as plenteous as stones;"^(c) "it was nothing accounted of in the days of Solomon."^(d) His fame brought the Queen of Sheba to his court: and when she "had seen all Solomon's wisdom, and the house that he had built, and the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and *their apparel*, and his cup-bearers, and his ascent by which he went up unto the House of the LORD,—there was no more spirit in her. And she said to the King, It was a true report that I heard in mine own land; and behold, the half was not told me."^(e)

The CREATOR here declares that the streaked and freckled flower, blooming unseen or uncared for, is more beautifully arrayed than "even Solomon, in all his glory." And we need only "consider," in order to convince ourselves that so it is. Truth is not more widely removed from Falsehood, than are the natural hues of flowers from the dyed garments of men.

30 Wherefore, if GOD so clothe the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven,

He ranks "the lilies" with "the grass of the field," and notices their ordinary

{b} Psalm cxlv. 9.
{d} 1 Kings x. 21.

{c} 2 Chron. i. 15.
{e} 1 Kings x. 4 to 7.

fate: both in order to show us how little they are worth, and to remind us of the reason why.

shall He not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?

If, then, God hath, in such matchless splendour, clad these His meaner works,—how much more shall He provide for the covering of *Man*; whom He created *in His own image*, and endowed with a reasonable Soul; “for whom,” also, “Christ died,” and so glorious a destiny is reserved in store!

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal shall we be clothed?

Verily, “*To the poor*” the Gospel was preached; (*f*)—its words of warning, no less than its words of promise! For, are not Meat,—Drink,—Clothing,—subjects of anxiety rather with *the poor*, than with *the rich*? Let that class, then, which hath so many glorious consolations in God’s Word, take the present as a solemn caution addressed to themselves.

Our Lord’s words do, indeed, convey a lesson to rich and poor alike; for *daintiness* in Meat, Drink, Clothing,—“*What*,” and “*wherewithal*,” anxiety, therefore, about the *kind* of thing, rather than about the thing itself,—is here specially forbidden. Moreover, just as the petition for “Daily Bread,” was found to be a prayer that “God would send us all things that be needful both for our souls and bodies,”—so, doubtless, is every temporal object of personal anxiety included in the present mention of Food and Raiment. But then, the words must be allowed to have their own special, and proper sense; and *that* is never to be overlooked in expositions of Scripture. Poverty has wondrous privileges, mighty blessings, splendid promises; (as well it may! for it is a most heavy and bitter portion): but, doubtless, it has its own peculiar dangers and warnings, likewise: and *this* is one of them.

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your Heavenly FATHER knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

Compare ver. 8, and see the note there. Observe also, that our Lord, while He declares the Divine Knowledge, admits also the human “need, of all these things.”

The Blessed speaker does not say “*GOD* knoweth;” but, “*Your Heavenly Father* knoweth.” And the reason is plain. That comfortable appellation is the foundation of all our Hope. If He be *our Father*, then are we *His Children*; and it cannot be that He will overlook us, in our need. Consider those words of Isaiah,—“Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? Yea, *they may forget,—yet will I not forget thee!*” (*g*)

33 But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and His righteousness,

“His righteousness:” for all Righteousness is of *Him*, and all our good deeds are *His*. See the following places of Scripture:—1 Corinthians xv. 10; 2 Corinthians iii. 5; Galat. ii. 8; Eph. iii. 7; Philippians ii. 13; St. John xv. 4.

and all these things shall be added unto you.

That is,—Make it your chief concern to please God, and to serve Him; to do as He has commanded, and thus, to hasten the coming of His Kingdom;—(an injunction which, we may be sure, our SAVIOUR here delivered not without special reference to the subject which immediately precedes;—and then, all these other things will be found to follow. “Godliness,” as St. Paul in a certain place declares, is profitable unto all things; *having promise of the life that now is*,” as well as “of that which is to come.” (*h*) Compare the language of Psalm xxxvii. 3, 4 and 25; xli. 1, 2; all cxii. (to which, the words just quoted from St. Paul, are

(*f*) St. Matt. xi. 5, and St. Luke iv. 18.

(*g*) Isaiah xlix. 15.

(*h*) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

actually prefixed, as a heading), Prov. xi. 24, 25; xix. 17; xxviii. 27. See especially St. Mark x. 29, 30.

"Almsgiving, or Mercifulness, was never the wasting or lessening of any man's estate, to himself or his posterity; but rather, the increasing of it." So said the pious and most charitable Dr. Hammond, once, in a sermon at St. Paul's Cross. (i) A Church dignitary, whose charities were so remarkable and profuse as to provoke the inquiry, How he contrived, having so large a family, not only to subsist, but even to grow rich?—made answer that, several years before, he happened to be present at a Sermon at St. Paul's Cross, where the Preacher, recommending the Duty of Almsgiving, assured his auditory that *that* was the most certain way to acquire Riches. He had accordingly resolved to try the experiment When this story was told to Dr. Hammond, he admitted that he had himself preached the Sermon which had borne such blessed fruit.

34 Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself.

He speaks of to-morrow, as if it were a person; and one, sufficiently alive to his own interests;—sufficiently beset with his own anxieties, also,—to render any solicitude for him, on our part, quite superfluous, as well as unreasonable.

Sufficient unto the day *is* the evil thereof.

"Evil," is here opposed to Good, generally: not to the good of Virtue, but to the good of Ease, and freedom from Care.

"To-day,"—like "to-morrow," just above,—comes forward as a person. He bends beneath his own proper burden, and asks why he is to be further oppressed by the weight of To-morrow's cares,—with which he has no concern?

"Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof." CHRIST hath spoken it. With such words let us be content to resign the future to *His* keeping, who surveys the Future, as He does the Past and the Present,—at a glance: who shapes it, as He pleases; and who will enable us to bear whatever His Providence shall see fit therein to order for us.

THE PRAYER.

O GOD, who declarest Thy Almighty Power most chiefly in showing Mercy and Pity; mercifully grant unto us such a measure of Thy Grace, that we, running the way of Thy Commandments, may obtain Thy gracious Promises, and be made partakers of Thy Heavenly treasure; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

(i) Called *The Poor Man's Tithing*, preached in 1640.

CHAPTER VII.

1 CHRIST ending His sermon in the Mount, reproveth rash judgment. 6 Forbiddeth to cast holy things to dogs. 7 Exhorteth to Prayer. 13 To enter in at the strait gate. 15 To beware of false Prophets. 21 Not to be hearers, but doers of the Word. 24 Like houses builded on a rock, 26 and not on the sand.

1 JUDGE not, that ye be not judged.

Are we, then, not to use that critical faculty, which God has implanted in every one of us, whereby we are enabled to judge of actions, and of those who perform them? The very supposition is absurd. Some men have a *commission* given them to judge,—whether in things spiritual or in things temporal. Of *all* it is required that they shall “have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil.” (a) But what our Lord here condemns is, rash censure: a severe passing of sentence on doubtful actions; an uncharitable Judgment based on insufficient evidence. Charity “thinketh no evil; . . . believeth all things, hopeth all things;” (b) but such is not the spirit which prevails amongst mankind. How heavily does this precept of our Lord bear on one of the fashionable vices of what is called “society!”

“Who art thou that judgest another man’s servant?” asks the Apostle: “to his own master he standeth or falleth.” (c) That is, For his conduct is no affair of thine.—“Why dost thou judge thy brother? or why dost thou set at nought thy brother?” he presently asks: “For we shall all stand before the judgment-seat of CHRIST.” (d) That is, For thou wilt have to give an account hereafter for thyself also.—“Judge nothing before the time,” (e) says the same Apostle in another place. That is, For the great and terrible Day shall reveal the truth of the matter.—St. James says,—“Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that speaketh evil of his brother, and judgeth his brother, speaketh evil of the Law, and judgeth the Law.” That is, Judge not, for it is a monstrous and unseemly proceeding in such an one as thou art.—But our Blessed Lord’s precept is briefer and stronger. “Judge not,” He says, “*that ye be not judged* :” a most weighty reason, and prevailing motive, truly, for withholding or suspending censure. The Divine Speaker proceeds to explain it:

2 For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again.

Which reminds us of the plea we daily urge for forgiveness, in the Lord’s Prayer. “For,”—as St. James speaks,—“he shall have Judgment without Mercy, that hath showed no Mercy.” (f)

But, is the Retribution hinted at in these two verses, Divine or Human? Doubtless *both* are implied: though the *English* of the corresponding verses in St. Luke’s Gospel, (vi. 37, 38,) as well as ver. 12 of the present chapter, might be thought to show that it was *this World’s* Judgment to which the Divine Speaker chiefly alluded.

(a) Heb. v. 14.

(d) Romans xiv. 10.

(b) 1 Cor. viii. 5 and 7.

(c) 1 Cor. iv. 5.

(e) Romans xiv. 4.

(f) St. James ii. 13.

The connection between this verse and the next, (wherein our LORD makes use of a well-known Jewish proverb,) is suggested by that saying of the Great Apostle,—“If we would *judge ourselves*, we should not be judged.”(g)

3 And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?

Some remarks on these words will be found in the notes on St. Luke's Gospel,—vi. 41.

4 Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam *is* in thine own eye?

This verse is not a mere echo of the last. *There, Censure* was spoken of, and the person addressed was a *Judge*: *here*, the reference is to *Admonition*, and the person addressed is a *Guide*. Refer to St. Matthew xv. 14; and observe that a parallel to that verse is found in the place which corresponds with the present, in St. Luke's Gospel,—vi. 39: “Can the blind lead the blind? Shall they not both fall into the ditch?”

5 Thou hypocrite,

Reminding us of—“Thou wicked Servant!” in St. Matt. xviii. 25.

first cast out the beam out of thine own eye;

Leighton says,—“If thou wouldst find much favour and peace with God and man, be very low in thine own eyes. Forgive thyself little, and others much.” So, also, says Bishop Sanderson.

and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye.

So that a man is *then* fit to admonish others, when he has first laboured to correct himself, and thereby sharpened his own power of spiritual discernment.

It is highly instructive to notice on how many occasions our LORD directs men to turn from the study of their neighbours' failings to the discovery of their own: as in St. John viii. 7; St. Luke xiii. 1 to 5, &c. Of kindred interest, is the *practical* turn which the same Divine Speaker gave to all merely *speculative* inquiries. As, St. Luke xiii. 23, 24; St. John xxi. 21, 22, &c.

6 Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,

Compare St. Matthew xv. 26. See also Deut. xxiii. 18; Phil. iii. 2; Rev. xxii. 15. Dogs and Swine—the latter, an unclean(h) animal—are found connected in 2 St. Peter ii. 22.

neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.

Our LORD seems to be still addressing Himself to those who are called to be Guides and Teachers,—the Dispensers of His Word and Sacraments. In this place, He requires them to make proof of that faculty of spiritual discernment, for the attainment of which He gave directions in the preceding verse.

The subject, therefore, is here changed; but the connection of thought is preserved, or rather pursued. Not only the mysteries of the Faith, but even Admonition and Reproof, are to be dispensed with a due regard to men's ability to receive them; lest the Religion of CHRIST (the Pearl of great price) be brought into contempt, and its professors exposed to insult and outrage.

And, generally, a warning is here given, (very needful, it may be thought, in

(g) 1 Cor. xi. 31.

(h) Leviticus xi. 8, and Deut. xiv. 8; Isaiah lxvi. 17.

these times.) against irreverence in regard of holy things; which may not be discoursed of in all companies,—without respect had to circumstances of time and place.

In what follows there seems to be a change of subject.

7 Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Verse 7 to ver. 11, inclusive, will be found to recur, almost word for word, in St. Luke xi. 9 to 13. The allusion is, clearly, to *Prayer*; as the Church teaches us in the beginning of her Baptismal Service: and earnestness, or rather *importunity*, in Prayer, is the Duty here enforced. By a reference to the place in St. Luke's Gospel, it will be perceived that these injunctions are there preceded by the Parable of the Friend at Midnight, who hears another "knock," and "ask" for the bread which he is "seeking." That parable, again, is immediately preceded by the Lord's Prayer;—a circumstance which teaches us to connect the present place with the Lord's Prayer in chap. vi.

How great is our need of these exhortations to *earnestness* in our approaches to God! Who shall tell the amount of blessedness from which we are excluded,—from which we exclude ourselves?

Men "say their prayers;" but they do not always *pray*. And this formal service grows upon Christians who are unwary and slothful. "Many that pray," (to use the words of a good man.) "know little of this Divine art of Prayer; this wrestling with God; this resolving not to let Him go until He bless them,—as Jacob did." (i)

8 For every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.

So strictly does God stand pledged to answer Prayer! Compare also such places as the following,—St. Matt. xxi. 22; St. Mark xi. 24; St. Luke xi. 5 to 13; St. John xiv. 13, 14; xv. 7, 16; xvi. 23; 1 St. John iii. 22; St. James i. 5, &c.

If any complain that they have "asked," "sought," "knocked" in vain, let them be reminded, 1stly, That Prayer is *not always* answered immediately: see, for instance, St. Matt. xv. 22 to 28; St. Luke i. 13; St. Luke xviii. 1 to 7, &c. And the reason why God sometimes delays His gifts may be, (as a great man has pointed out,) because *that* which is long looked for is sweeter when obtained; but *that* is held cheap which comes at once. 2dly, That it is often an act of the truest Love to withhold a favour, however earnestly prayed for; as when God would not suffer St. Paul's "thorn in the flesh" to depart from him, (k)—thereby regarding the highest good of His Servant: namely, his spiritual perfection. A petition is sometimes granted in wrath, and as a punishment; as when God gave flesh to His people in the wilderness, (l) and afterwards granted them a King. (m) "I gave them a King," He says, "*in Mine anger*." (n) Consider the petition of the devils which St. Matthew relates, together with its consequences,—viii. 31, 32. Consider further the petition of the Gergesenes, immediately after: with which, also, our Lord complied. But, 3dly, Take note that Prayer, though sometimes actually *refused* (for merciful reasons,) at the time, is sometimes, (*perhaps always*;) eventually answered in a different, (and far higher,) sense than was expected or intended: compare, for instance, Deut. iii. 23 to 27, with St. Luke ix. 28 to 31; St. Mark x. 35 to 40, with St. Matthew xix. 27 and 28; St. John ii. 3, 4, with what follows: and consider the sense in which the promises made to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were fulfilled.

But the promise is far oftener fulfilled, in the strict letter, and at once. God commonly answers Prayer immediately, and in the very sense intended by the supplicant. Consider the following texts: Gen. xviii. 23 to 33; xx. 17; xxiv. 12 to 15,—(where observe that Rebekah came out "*before Eliezer had done speaking*," ver. 15); Numb. xi. 2; Joshua x. 12 to 14; 1 Samuel xii. 17, 18; 1 Kings xiii. 4 to 6; 2 Kings iv. 32 to 35; xix. 15 to 20, and 35; xx. 1 to 6, (where observe that the Word of the Lord came to Isaiah, "*afore he was gone out into the middle court*,"

(i) Genesis xxxii. 26.

(k) 2 Cor. xii. 7 to 9.

(l) Psalm lxxviii. 18 to 31.

(m) 1 Samuel viii. 6 to 9, and 19 to 22.

(n) Hosea xiii. 11.

ver. 4.) See also verses 8 to 11; Daniel ix. 3, 20, and following verses: (taking note, that "*while* [the prophet] *was speaking* in prayer" (ver. 20, 21,) the Angel Gabriel brought an answer to his prayer, and informed him that "*at the beginning of his supplication* the Commandment came forth" (ver. 23); and, that "*from the first day* that he did set his heart to understand, and to chasten himself before his God, *his words were heard*" (Dan. x. 12.); St. Matthew viii. 1, 2, 3; ix. 27, 29; St. Mark x. 51, 52; St. Luke xvii. 13, 14; xxiii. 42, 43 (the case of the Malefactor on the Cross); St. John iv. 49 to 53; Acts ix. 11 (the case of "Saul of Tarsus," to whom Ananias was sent, "for behold,—*he prayeth*"); x. 1 to 4 (the case of Cornelius); xii. 5 to 10 (the case of St. Peter in prison); St. James v. 16 to 18, &c. &c.

But, because *Faith* is the great support, the very life of Prayer,(o) our LORD next proceeds,—by an argument, the very force of which all must admit,—to persuade us that we shall assuredly be heard, and receive the things we pray for.

9 Or what man is there of you, whom if his son ask Bread will he give him a Stone?

Rather, "Which of you, though he be but *a man*,"—though merely *a human being*. See a remark on the first word of St. Matthew xii. 29.

10 Or if he ask a Fish, will he give him a Serpent?

Take notice that it was with "Bread" and "Fish" that our SAVIOUR CHRIST—"our Father which is in Heaven," (see verse 11),—on three several occasions supplied the earthly needs of His children:—twice on the eastern side of the Lake, when He fed (1st) the five thousand—St. Matt. xiv. 17 to 21; and (2nd) the four thousand—St. Matt. xv. 34 to 38; (3rd) after His Resurrection, when He showed Himself to the seven Disciples at the "Sea of Tiberias"—St. John xxi. 9 to 13.

11 If ye then, being evil,

That is,—notwithstanding the evil which dwells in all of you. This, then, is one of the many places where the corruption of Man's nature, (the doctrine of *Original Sin* as it is called,) is clearly laid down.

know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in Heaven give good things to them that ask Him!

Compare with this, the Parable of the Unjust Judge,—St. Luke xviii. especially verses 6 and 7.

Take notice, also, that in the parallel place of St. Luke's Gospel,(p) instead of "good things," there is a promise that our Heavenly Father will give "the HOLY SPIRIT to them that ask Him." *That*, then, is *the* good thing we ought to pray for; and which we do pray for, on "Christmas Day,"—on the "Sunday called Quinquagesima,"—on the "Sunday after Ascension Day,"—on "Whit-Sunday,"—and on the "Nineteenth Sunday after Trinity."

12 Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them:

This golden precept reminds us of the two first verses of the present chapter; as will appear more clearly by comparing them with the corresponding place in St. Luke's Gospel,—vi. 37, 38. Compare also St. Luke vi. 31.

for this is the Law and the Prophets.

As it is elsewhere said,—"*Love is the fulfilling of the Law:*"(q) and again,—"*All the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour*

(o) St. James i. 5, 6, 7.

(p) St. Luke xi. 13.

(q) Romans xiii. 10.

as thyself.' "(r) Compare St. Matt. xxii. 37 to 40. The meaning is, that the teaching of Moses and the Prophets with respect to our Duty towards our Neighbour, may be reduced to this.

The connection of ver. 12 with what goes before is not very obvious. But as our Lord, at the end of His prayer in the vi. Chapter,(s) enforced the duty of a Forgiving Temper towards others, as the necessary condition of our obtaining forgiveness at God's hands,—so, here, He teaches us how we must act towards others in order to secure a favourable hearing for ourselves when we come "asking,"—"seeking,"—"knocking,"—at the Heavenly Gate.

13 Enter ye in at the strait gate:

However strait and narrow the Gate by which we enter may be,—however rugged and painful the Way beyond it may prove,—the Christian Pilgrim should remember that there is no lack of room,(t) of pleasure and enjoyment,(u) beyond. The ease and delight to be experienced *there*, will abundantly make up for all trouble and hardship by the way.

for wide *is* the gate, and broad *is* the way, that leadeth to Destruction, and many there be which go in thereat:

Mention is made not only of the strait and the wide *gate*, but of the narrow and the broad *way*,—in order to remind us that as no one falls into the hands of Satan, unless he walks "in the way of sinners,"(x) so can no one hope to enter into Life, but by *walking*, first, in "*the way of God's Commandments*,"(y) and *treading* "*the path of Life*,"(z)

Take notice that as we read of but *two* ways,—and of *two* gates,—so are we told of but *two* conditions hereafter; namely, *Life*, and *Destruction*. No mention is made of a *third* course in this world, or of a *third* place in the next! Every man, therefore, is travelling along one of those two roads; and is daily drawing nearer either to Eternal Happiness, or to Eternal Misery. See the note on the last part of St. Matth. iii. 12.

14 Because strait *is* the gate, and narrow *is* the way, which leadeth unto Life, and few there be that find it.

Observe, that the strait gate and the narrow way, require *to be found*. The other needs no search: *they* find it who go astray. "Yet, so much pains is there taken *to find it*," says Sanderson, "that I verily believe half the pains many a man taketh to go to Hell, would have brought him to Heaven."

Observe also, that under the figure of "a gate," our first entrance on a religious life is here discoursed of: and that by calling it "*strait*," our Lord teaches us to expect to find the first beginnings of Religion, our first steps in Holiness, difficult. Evil habits to be broken off,—old companions to be parted with,—constitute a severe trial. But, thenceforward begins that Peace which the World can neither give nor take away; and St. Paul has told us what should be the conduct of him who runs in a race, with so glorious a prize in view. See Philippians iii. 13, 14.

Not that "the gate" is "strait," or "the way" "narrow" in themselves. It is the loftiness of Pride, and the swelling thoughts of the heart, which makes the gate seem "strait:" the encumbrance of Wealth, and the allurements of Pleasure, which make the way seem "narrow." "Learn of Me," is the gracious exhortation of our SAVIOUR CHRIST: "for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest unto your souls,"(a) "*I am the Door*. By Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved,"(b) "*I am the Way*. . . . No man cometh unto the FATHER but by Me,"(c)

Very solemn and affecting is the prediction with which this verse concludes. We are disposed to inquire with that "one," whose question, but not whose name, has been recorded;—"Lord, are there few that be saved?"(d) Most instructive is the

(r) Gal. v. 14,—quoting Levit. xix. 18. (s) St. Matt. vi. 14, 15. (t) St. John xiv. 2.

(u) Psalm xvi. 11: xvii. 15: xxxvii. 8.—Isaiah lxiv. 4 (quoted 1 Cor. ii. 9).—Romans viii. 18.—Rev. xxi. 10 to 23.

(x) Psalm i. 4. (y) Ps. exix. 32. (z) Ps. xvi. 11. (a) St. Matthew x. 29.

(b) St. John x. 9.

(c) St. John xiv. 6.

(d) St. Luke xiii. 23.

answer he received,—which, we may be sure, is addressed by CHRIST to His Church, for ever,—“*Strive ye earnestly to enter in at the strait gate.*” The curious questioning is repressed,—the hearty endeavour is encouraged,—in that, and every other place of Scripture. See above, on verse 5.

The next verse contains a warning against false Teachers,—Guides who may not be trusted by those who desire to find the strait Gate.

15 Beware of false Prophets,

“False Prophets” are generally false *Teachers*. They who taught, with a special and direct commission from God, were often miraculously endowed by Him with the power of foretelling future events; but they were not called Prophets for *that* reason; nor was *that*, by any means, the only, or even the chief, part of their office. They were called *Prophets* because they declared the mind of God, *on GOD’S behalf*;—whether respecting things past, present, or to come. See St. Matt. xiv. 5: xxi. 11. St. Luke vii. 16: xxiv. 19. St. John ix. 17, &c.

The “Man of God” was not mindful of the present precept, when he accepted the invitation of the “Old Prophet,”—as related in 1 Kings xiii. 11 to 32. How interesting is the coincidence of that chapter, (which is appointed for the first lesson on the Eighth Sunday after Trinity,) with the words before us,—which are the first words of the Gospel for the same Day!

which come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravening wolves.

Since Christians are called “sheep,” “sheep’s *clothing*” will signify the outward appearances of Religion. St. Paul probably alluded to these words of our LORD, and to St. John x. 12, when he said to the elders of the Church of Ephesus,—“I know that after my departing shall grievous *wolves* enter in among you, not sparing the flock.”(e) Compare Ezekiel xxii. 27.

Consider, also, 2 Corinthians xi. 13 to 15.

16 Ye shall know them by their fruits.

These words supply the connection of thought in all that follows, to the end of the chapter. Men’s *works* are henceforward spoken of; and first, under the similitude of *fruit*; according to the frequent practice of Holy Scripture. See, for instance, St. Luke iii. 8. Presently, (namely, in ver. 21), the Divine Speaker will proceed to say that it is *works* not *words* which He requires: the *fruits* of Faith,—not mere protestations, which, like leaves, often give false promise.(f) Lastly, (namely, in ver. 24), He will contrast the fate of those who *hear* His sayings, and do them, with that of those (in ver. 26) who *hear*, yet *do them not*.

Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles?

Does not St. James,—iii. 12,—allude to these words of his LORD; or to the parallel verse in St. Luke’s Gospel,—vi. 44?

17, 18 Even so every good tree bringeth forth good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither *can* a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.

Take note, that our LORD,—speaking of men and their actions under the figure of trees and their fruits,—does not say that a good tree cannot become corrupt; or, that a corrupt tree cannot become good;—but only, that *while a Tree continues good or evil*, its fruits must be strictly corresponding. To become good, the wild olive must be grafted into the Good Olive-tree: the branches must abide in the Vine: *then* only do men experience renewal, when they are made partakers of the nature of CHRIST: they are fruitful only so long as they “abide in Him.” See St. John xv. 2, 4, 5, 6, &c. Refer to the note on St. Matt. xiii. 23.

(e) Acts xx. 29.

(f) See St. Mark xi. 13.

19 Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire.

MESSIAH here employs the very language which His Forerunner had used before Him,—as recorded by St. Matthew iii. 10.

See the second note on St. Matthew iv. 17.

20 Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them.

The Divine Speaker, before passing on to another branch of His subject, here recalls the words with which He began. See the first words of ver. 16.

A test is hereby supplied us,—doubtless the most safe of any,—whereby to judge of those who come to us with claims on our submission, and Belief. Are they jealous for the true honour of ALMIGHTY GOD,—His Holy Name, His Holy Word, and His Holy Day? Are they obedient to authority,—loving,—pure,—honest,—truthful? Of charitable speech and contented tempers? If not, “by their fruits ye shall know them” to be other than what they pretend to be.

Let those who have left the Church of their Fathers, and lost her Spirit, “hear,” if yet they have “ears to hear.”

21 Not every one that saith unto Me, LORD, LORD,

Compare St. Matthew xxiii. 7.

shall enter into the Kingdom of Heaven; but He that doeth the Will of My FATHER which is in Heaven.

It is not enough therefore to profess Christianity,—to use the prayers of the Church,—and to call upon the Name of CHRIST:—but to this must be added diligence in doing His known Will. Many there are, who, in the words of the Apostle, “*profess that they know God, but in works deny Him.*”(g)

For the connection of thought between this verse and what precedes, see the note on ver. 16.

Obedience is made the condition of acceptance, and the test of Love, throughout the Bible:—consider 1 Samuel xv. 22: Hosea vi. 6: St. John xiv. 15, 21, 23: xv. 10, 14: 1 St. John v. 3, &c.

22 Many will say to Me in that Day,

“Say unto Me:”—observe how the Divine Speaker here secretly brings in the mention of *Himself*, as the judge of all flesh!

“*In that Day,*”—the great and terrible Day of CHRIST, when He shall come “in the glory of His FATHER with the holy Angels.”(h) The Day of Judgment is frequently so spoken of by our LORD and His Apostles,—as if always occupying so conspicuous a place in the sphere of their mental vision as to make further description superfluous:—see St. Luke x. 12: 2 Thess. i. 10: 2 Tim. i. 12 and 18: iv. 8, &c.

LORD, LORD, have we not prophesied in Thy Name? and in Thy Name have cast out devils? and in thy Name done many wonderful works?

“In Thy Name,”—that is, by Thy authority. Compare St. Matthew xviii. 20: St. Mark ix. 38, 39: St. Luke x. 17, &c.

This may be literally done, by evil men:—as when Pharaoh’s Magicians for a while contended with Moses,—Exodus vii. 11, 12, 22: viii. 7. See also Acts xix. 13 to 15, &c.; and consider the case of Balaam, of Saul, of Judas, and of Caiaphas.

We learn, hence, that lowly graces are more to be coveted than mighty gifts: since *these* are sure to win for their possessor a share of the Divine favour, whereas *those* often prove the severest trial. Whence the Apostle could truly say to the

(g) Titus i. 16.

(h) St. Mark viii. 38.

Corinthian Church, after reviewing their wondrous spiritual endowments,—“And yet show I unto you a *more excellent way*:(i) proceeding, forthwith, to discourse to them of “that most excellent gift of *Charity*,—the very bond of Peace and of all Virtues.”

“Gifts are as gold, which adorns the Temple,” says Burkitt: “but Grace is like the Temple that sanctifies the gold.”

It is remarkable how many parts of the Sermon on the Mount have reference to those who are Guides or Teachers. See verses 4, 5, and 6, of the present chapter. The warning in ver. 22 seems especially addressed to those who are in the Ministry.

23 And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you:

That is,—Openly declare that I never acknowledged you as Mine. God is said to *know* those only of whom He approves. See Ps. i. 6. St. Matthew xxv. 12. St. Luke xiii. 25. 1 Cor. viii. 3, &c.

depart from Me, ye that work iniquity.

What a miserable picture is discovered to us here! But the startling circumstance in all this, is, the manifest *self-delusion* of those who will be so addressed. This is, surely, very much to be noted. “Many will say to Me, in that day,”—is the prophecy of Him to whom the Future, like the Present and the Past, is fully known. Men could not address such words to their Judge, unless they believed them true, also.

And yet, this declaration as to what will be hereafter, should create no astonishment. Death separates the soul from the body, but it does not change the heart or the mind. If, then, men live and die in a state of self-delusion,—as we see men daily doing,—should it surprise us to be told that they will at last wake up, in the same state in which they fall asleep?

24 Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them,

“If ye *know* these things,” says our Lord in a certain place, “happy are ye if ye *do* them.”(k) And such is the constant language of Holy Scripture,—as in St. Luke xi. 28: St. John ix. 31: Romans ii. 13: St. James i. 22 to 25, &c. The connection of this verse with the preceding, has been pointed out in the note on verse 16.

In what follows, *the end* of those who are “doers of the Word,” and of those who are “hearers only,” is set forth: and it is worth remarking that both classes of persons, alike, are represented as *building for themselves a House*. But only to one class does that House prove a place of refuge and shelter; to the other, it proves the very chamber of Death.

I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his House upon a Rock:

See the note on St. Luke vi. 48.

25 And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that House; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a Rock.

“And that Rock was CHRIST,”(l)—as it is said in another place: “for other foundation can no man lay.” “Now, if any man build upon this foundation, gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, stubble; every man’s work shall be made manifest: for the Day shall declare it, because it shall be revealed by fire; and the fire shall try every man’s work of what sort it is. If any man’s work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward.”(m)—So constant is the imagery of the SPIRIT!

(i) 1 Cor. xii. 31.

(k) St. John xiii. 17.

(l) 1 Cor. x. 4.

(m) 1 Cor. iii. 11 to 14.

David, in like manner, speaks of CHRIST as “the Rock of Salvation.” (*n*) Compare also what is said by the prophet Isaiah,—(as he is interpreted by St. Paul, (*o*) and St. Peter,) (*p*)—of the *Rock* laid in Sion;—on whom “whosoever believeth . . . shall not be ashamed.” (*q*)

This reference, however, to one of His own titles, was not the *primary* meaning of our SAVIOUR’S words,—although it was doubtless comprehended in them. And indeed those words of His have a yet deeper meaning, which it shall suffice to allude to, briefly. For *who* is the “Wise Man” spoken of in the text, but CHRIST Himself,—who is sometimes called Wisdom? (*r*) And what is the “House” intended but His Church, which He hath so builded on a rock(*s*) that it shall never fall; and concerning which it had been said, long before, by the Spirit of Prophecy, “Wisdom hath builded her House?” (*t*) . . . The Church of CHRIST is the House of CHRIST: for He hath “builded the House,” and is “as a Son over His own House; whose House are we:” (*u*)—“God’s building,” (*x*) as the Apostle speaks; against whom neither “rain” nor “floods,” nor “winds,”—no, nor the very gates of Hell itself shall prevail; “if we hold fast the confidence, and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.” (*y*)

26, 27 And every one that heareth these sayings of Mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his House upon the sand: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that House; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.

Some remarks on these words, the Reader will find in the notes on St. Luke vi. 49.

But *when* do “the rain”—“the floods”—and “the winds,” conspire to try the stability of the structure here described? In part, doubtless, in the Day of Adversity. *Then* is the building put sorely to the proof. But the Great and Terrible Day of the LORD it is, which will bring with it the severest trial. The miserable man who has rested, all his life long, in a barren, formal assent to the Doctrines of the Gospel, will then be found to have built his House on the sand: while those blessed ones who have been rather *faithful doers*, than *frequent hearers* of God’s Word, will then be “clothed upon” with “a building of God, an House not made with hands, eternal in the Heavens.” (*z*)

“Oh! take heed,” says pious Leighton, “of founding your house in the sand. Though ever so stately and fair built, and showing fine, yet that foundation will be its ruin. There is no safe building but on the rock,—that Rock of Salvation who here taught this doctrine. Then, come storms as they will, there can be no fear. “He that buildeth on Him shall not be ashamed.” (*a*) No matter what houses or lands ye have *here*, whether any or none,—(He Himself had none here:;—) provided you build on Him, as the Fountain of eternal blessedness! Oh, that men would think of this; and amidst all their ensuring of things still unsure, would mind the making of *this* sure, which may be made so sure for ever as not to be moved!”

Thus ends the “Sermon on the Mount,”—the fullest connected specimen of our SAVIOUR’S teaching which the HOLY SPIRIT has seen fit to set on record. We cannot surely survey it too carefully, or study it in too humble and teachable a temper. Perhaps it will be well to consider it partly as a map,—wherein the broad outlines of Christian duty are clearly laid down: partly as a mirror,—in which we behold ourselves, that is, our fallen Nature, faithfully reflected.

Considered as a Map of Christian Duty,—we are reminded that some of the lowliest graces are the most highly prized in God’s sight: Humility, Meekness, Mercifulness, (chap. v. 1 to 12.) Next, that under the Veil of the Law, were hid the

(*n*) Ps. lxxxix. 26; xcv. 1. See also Ps. xix. 14; xxviii. 1; xlii. 9, &c.

(*o*) Romans ix. 33.

(*p*) 1 St. Peter ii. 6.

(*q*) Isaiah xxviii. 16.—Note, that *shame* will be the portion of the sinner, in the last day. See Daniel xii. 2. Revel. vi. 15 to 17, &c.

(*r*) Namely, throughout the Book of Proverbs.

(*s*) St. Matt. xvi. 18.

(*t*) Proverbs ix. 1.

(*u*) Hebrews iii. 3 and 6.

(*x*) 1 Cor. iii. 9. Compare 2 Sam. vii. 13.

(*y*) Hebrews iii. 6.

(*z*) 2 Cor. v. 1.

(*a*) 1 St. Peter ii. 6.

features of the Gospel: (verses 17 to 20) the Law of Love, under the Sixth Commandment,—the Law of Purity, under the Seventh,—and the like. (Verses 21 to 48.)

Considering the Sermon on the Mount as a Mirror,—and therefore as intended to teach us something about ourselves,—how startling is it to discover, (it would be more becoming, perhaps, to say,—How startling is it, *to be reminded,*) that our chief danger, whether we give Alms, (vi. 1 to 4,)—Pray, (ver. 5 to 15)—or Fast, (ver. 16 to 18,) is on the side of *Vain-glory!* arises out of *our desire of human praise!* See chap. vi. 1, 5, 16; and the notes thereon.

Surprising, also, seems the assurance in chap. vi. 14, 15, that we require so very special a dissuasive against cherishing *an unforgiving temper!*

The large space occupied by the warning against *Covetousness*, (ver. 19 to 24) and *Worldly Anxiety*, (ver. 25 to 34,) is surely a most instructive circumstance. This has been already remarked upon in the last note on chap. vi. ver. 24.

In the way of Precept, the last of these three Chapters (chap. vii.) is chiefly remarkable for the golden rule of Duty which is laid down in verses 1, 2, and 12. It contains also a weighty exhortation to Earnestness,—first, in Prayer, (ver. 7 to 11, which is to be taken in connection with the great Pattern of Prayer in chap. vi. 9 to 13;) next, in working out our own Salvation (ver. 13, 14.) The Mirror is again held up to Human Nature by the warning against Hypocrisy, Deceit, and Self-Delusion; whether in ourselves (ver. 3 to 5: ver. 21 to 27;) or in others, (ver. 15 to 20.)

The Discourse ends by contrasting the condition of the Righteous and the Wicked; and by describing what will be their fate in the great and terrible Day. And whereas it is sometimes said that a Sermon should always end with cheerful words of Hope and Encouragement, it is observable that in this specimen of Divine Teaching the last place has been reserved for the miserable fate of him who “hears” the words of CHRIST, without “doing them.”

28, 29 And it came to pass, when JESUS had ended these sayings, the people were astonished at His Doctrine: for He taught them as *One* having authority, and not as the Scribes.

This may, doubtless, refer to the form in which our LORD delivered several of the foregoing precepts; see chap. v. verses 22, 28, 32, 34, 39, 44, &c.; and to the language of authority adopted by the Divine Speaker throughout the entire discourse. Moses and the Prophets had said,—“Thus saith the LORD:” but our SAVIOUR’S Word was “*I say unto you.*” “Being the Master of Law, He uttered things which were above the Law; changing the Letter to the Truth, and the figures to the spiritual meaning.” More than that, however, seems to be implied by this statement of the Evangelist concerning the effect which our SAVIOUR’S teaching produced on the multitude who listened. It is a hint,—one of the many hints scattered up and down the Gospels,—that, (as might have been expected,) there was something in the manner of our SAVIOUR CHRIST which awed and impressed beholders to a remarkable extent. Consider the following places:—St. Mark i. 22, (where the self-same words recur, and where see the note;) xi. 18; St. Luke iv. 15, and 20 to 22, and ver. 32; xix. 47, 48; St. John vii. 43 to 46; xviii. 6, &c.

THE PRAYER.

STIR up, we beseech Thee, O LORD, the wills of Thy faithful people; that they, plenteously bringing forth the fruit of good works, may of Thee be plenteously rewarded; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

2 CHRIST cleanseth the leper, 5 healeth the Centurion's servant, 14 Peter's mother-in-law, 16 and many other diseased: 18 sheweth how He is to be followed: 23 stilleth the Tempest on the Sea: 28 driveth the devils out of two men possessed, 31 and suffereth them to go into the swine.

As the thirteenth Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel is *The Treasury of Parables*, so is this Chapter and the next (the 8th and 9th.) *The Treasury of Miracles*. Throughout the three last Chapters, we have been listening to the wondrous Words of CHRIST:—in these two, some of His mightiest Works are set before us. The Works were for a Confirmation of the Word. See St. Mark xvi. 20: St. John iii. 2: v. 36: x. 23, 38, &c. Hebrews ii. 3, 4, &c.

1 When He was come down from the mountain, great multitudes followed Him.

We shall find that this concourse of persons,—the same which had been listening to the Sermon on the Mount,—followed our LORD into Capernaum; compare verses 5 and 10. On the day after, they followed Him to “a city called Nain.” See St. Luke vii. 11.

2 And, behold, there came a leper

It would appear,—from a comparison of verse 5 with St. Luke vii. 1, 2,—that the Historical order of events has been disregarded by St. Matthew, in this place. The HOLY SPIRIT has set the cure of one afflicted with leprosy *before* that of the Centurion's Servant who was “sick of the palsy,” (ver. 6.)

Doubtless, this was done with a deep motive. And when it is remembered that *Leprosy*, in Scripture, is the type of *Sin*,—it will perhaps seem a reasonable supposition that the Divine intention, in thus giving the foremost place to a case of leprosy, may have been, thereby to imply the purpose with which our SAVIOUR came into the World: (namely, to heal that more terrible malady which infected the whole Human Race, and which the disease of leprosy represented :) as well as to teach us that the bodily diseases which the Great Physician went about with purpose to cure, are *all* to be regarded as typical of the disorders of the soul. See the note on the last part of St. Luke v. 13: also the note on St. Mark ii. 3: also below, on ver. 17.

The miraculous cleansing of the leper, which follows, is recorded in three Gospels, being found also in St. Mark i. 40 to 45; and St. Luke v. 12 to 15.

and worshipped Him, saying, LORD, if Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

See the note on St. Mark i. 40.

This man “worshipped” CHRIST; as the Wise Men had done,^(a) and as so many others did: which merely means that they fell down, or knelt before Him.^(b) Did

(a) St. Matt. ii. 2.

(b) Compare this place with St. Mark i. 40, and St. Luke v. 12.—Compare also St. Matt. ix. 18, with St. Mark v. 22, and St. Luke viii. 41.—Again, compare St. Matt. xv. 25 with St. Mark vii. 25.

he know Him to be the Son of God? In the full sense of the term, it is *quite incredible* that he should have done so; but his offering, the Faith he brought,—whatever it may have been,—our SAVIOUR graciously accepted. “We are commonly not satisfied with anything that comes not up to our own height;” (says a good man:;) “but our meek REDEEMER accepts of what he finds, even in the very least, and extols it to the highest pitch it is capable of.”

3 And JESUS put forth His hand, and touched him,

How precious is every hint of *this* kind,—which sets the SAVIOUR, as it were, before our eyes!

But how far more precious is the consolation which this act of our SAVIOUR affords: in proving that nothing is too loathsome to obtain cleansing from *Him*!

Sometimes, our LORD cured by a touch,—as in St. Mark viii. 22 to 25. Sometimes, by a word,—as in St. John v. 8. Sometimes, by neither word nor touch,—as in St. John iv. 50. On this occasion, he employs *both* instruments. See the note on St. Luke v. 13: also the first note on St. Mark i. 41. But observe that it was neither the SAVIOUR's touch, nor the SAVIOUR's word,—but the SAVIOUR's *Will* which wrought miracles. The outward signs were but for the sake of the bystanders. Consider however, whether, besides every other reason for *touching* this Leper, there may not have been the merciful wish thereby to *comfort* the miserable sufferer.

saying, I will; be thou clean.

Take notice, here, that our SAVIOUR not only strictly granted the man his implied petition; but, by repeating the very words He had just before used, reminds us that the largeness of *His* mercies often corresponds exactly with the extent of *our* Faith. See below, the last note on ver. 13.

Leighton says,—“And thus, in His Word, He speaks to Sinners; where He hath revealed His *Will* together with His *Power*: and, that we may doubt it not, we may read it in His blood streaming forth for our cleansing. Yet, if any one out of a deep sense of his vileness, think, ‘I know that He *can* cleanse me, but *will* He look upon such an one? Or, if He look, will He not straight turn away? Will He vouchsafe to touch my filthy sores, and apply His own precious blood for my cleansing and healing?’ Yes, He ‘*will*.’ If He be not changed from what He was, He ‘*will*’ pity thee, and thou shalt find it.”

And immediately his leprosy was cleansed.

Or, as it is added in St. Mark,—“*as soon as He had spoken:*”(c) for, (in the language of an Eastern Bishop) “even this word ‘immediately’ is too slow to express the speed with which the deed was done.” Such, then, is the answer which God grants to Prayer! See the notes on St. Matthew vii. 8.

4 And JESUS said unto him, see thou tell no man;

This is a difficult command to explain with certainty. It was delivered, probably, because the knowledge of this miracle, instead of proving a benefit to certain of those whom the Leper would have “told,” was likely to prove a curse;—either by Blasphemy or Unbelief: or by exciting them to some act of malice. And thus our LORD, by His own practice, exemplified the precept which he delivered in the foregoing chapter,—namely, that we may not “cast our pearls before swine.” (vii. 6.) The injunction will be found further explained in the concluding note on the first chapter of St. Mark's Gospel.

but go thy way, show thyself to the Priest.

This is sometimes perverted, so as to make it appear by analogy that, in the case of the Christian Priesthood, it is needful in order to the cure of spiritual Leprosy,

—that is, of Sin,—that thou “show thyself to the Priest.” Whereas, it is manifest that as the cure of *Diseases*, in reality, rests with God; (and Leprosy, in particular, was known to be incurable by human skill;) so none can forgive *Sins* but God only; and the plain fact is that the object with which the afflicted person showed himself to the priest under the Law, was not *his cure*; but only in order to have his state pronounced upon,—to be “bound” or “loosed” *by authority*. For thus we read in Leviticus,—“He shall be brought unto the priest: and the priest shall go forth out of the Camp, and . . . look; and, behold, if the plague of leprosy be healed in the leper, then shall the priest . . . pronounce him clean;”—with many significant ceremonies, for which see Leviticus xiv. 2 to 7, and following verses.

Compare with the present place St. Luke xvii. 14

and offer the gift that Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

“The gift” will be found described in Leviticus xiv. 10. Take notice how true was that saying of our Lord,—“I am not come to destroy” the Law and the Prophets, “but to fulfill:”(d) so scrupulous was He, at all times, to require conformity and obedience, and to set an example of it. Indeed, it is easy to see that until *the Great Sacrifice* was offered on the Cross, it was proper that the sacrifices ordained in the Law should continue to be offered.

On the last words of this verse, see the note on St. Luke v. 14.

5 And when JESUS was entered into Capernaum, there came unto Him a Centurion, beseeching Him,

This person (the first-fruits of the Gentiles!) was a Roman Soldier,—the commander of a company;—who had become a proselyte, or convert to the Jewish Religion, and was probably stationed at Capernaum. From St. Luke we learn that his zeal had induced him to build a Synagogue in the City where he dwelt, for the use of the Nation whose purer faith he had adopted.

6 and saying, LORD, my servant lieth at home, sick of the palsy, grievously tormented.

Notice here the man’s kindness,—the humanity which brought him thus a suppliant to the great Physician, in behalf of the Slave, “who,” (as St. Luke says) “was dear unto him.”

7 And JESUS saith unto him, I will come and heal him.

“Who is like unto the Lord our God,” exclaims the Psalmist; “that hath His dwelling so high, and yet humbleth Himself to behold the things that are in Heaven and Earth?”(e) Yea, He humbled Himself yet more,—if possible: for He made the lowliest, and the meanest, and the weakest, the objects of His largest bounty, occasions for the chief display of His Almighty Power and Love.

8 The Centurion answered and said, LORD, I am not worthy that Thou shouldest come under my roof:

While he counted himself unworthy that Christ should come under his roof, (says an ancient Bishop,) he was counted worthy that Christ should enter into his heart: and this was a greater boon, and a higher blessedness. “He that humbleth himself shall be exalted,”—saith the SMITH.(f)

but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed.

He knew that it was not necessary that our Lord should enter his dwelling in order to work the cure of his servant. He may have had in mind the miraculous cure which our Lord by His mere word, had wrought some time before, on the

(d) St. Matthew v. 17.

(e) Psalm cxlii. 5.

(f) St. Luke xiv. 11.

Nobleman's son, in the same City; being Himself at Cana, all the while. See St. John iv. 46 to 53; and the note on St. Luke vii. 7.

The Humility of the speaker, no less than his Faith, shines out in this speech. He was ashamed to think that by the terms of his first message, (for which see St. Luke vii. 3,) he had solicited one whom he *knew* to be God, to come beneath the shadow of his roof. He therefore hastens forth to prevent the gracious intention of the SAVIOUR.

9 For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this *man*, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth *it*.

That is,—“For *I* am a man *not* supreme in command; but under the authority of a superior officer; and in turn, having soldiers under *me*: and yet, even *I* say to my soldiers and servants, Come, and Go, and am immediately obeyed. How much more must *Thou* be able, who art without superior, or even equal,—Thou to whom all creatures in Heaven and Earth do bow down and obey;—how much more must it be in *Thy* power to say ‘Begone!’ to this palsy, which is after all but a servant of thine!”

10 When JESUS heard it, he marvelled,

The stupendous miracle which He was about to work, showed Him to be “perfect God:”—the feeling of wonder, here noticed, showed him to be “*perfect Man*,” likewise; “of a *reasonable soul* and human flesh.” See the first note on St. John i. 14. See also the first note on St. Luke viii. 23. Observe, however, that for *our* sakes this act of our SAVIOUR CHRIST is recorded; in order that we may know at what *we* ought to marvel: namely, less at Wisdom, Wealth, and Grandeur, than at the fruits of *Faith*. And observe, that He who is here said to have “marvelled,” did but admire the work of His own Almighty Hands; and confess that it was “very good.” Faith, like every other Grace, is *GOD'S* gift.

and said to them that followed,

See the note on St. Luke vii. 9.

Verily I say unto you, I have not found so great faith, no, not in Israel.

That is, among the descendants of Abraham,—notwithstanding all their vaunted claims and real privileges,—our SAVIOUR had not met with such Faith as was exhibited by this Roman soldier; by birth, “an alien from the commonwealth of Israel, and stranger from the covenants of promise,”—as it is said in Ephesians ii. 12.

The wondrous vigour of this man's Faith may be perceived from what has been remarked above, in the note on ver. 9; but it is further worth observing that, by saying, “Speak the word only,” and not requesting the actual presence of CHRIST, he surpassed the Nobleman, (who had said “Sir, *come down* ere my child die:”)(*g*) and Jairus, (who, anxious for his little daughter, had said “*Come and lay Thy hands on her*:”)(*h*) and Martha and Mary, (who had said “*LORD, if Thou hadst been here* my brother had not died:”)(*i*) and many others. He seems to have had the fullest sense that he was addressing the ALMIGHTY.

Note, therefore, that not only did the degraded Nazareth, besides nursing the SAVIOUR of the World, nourish a Joseph and a Mary;—not only did Bethsaida, on which our LORD pronounced such a tremendous doom,(*k*) produce an Andrew, a Simon, and a Philip;(*l*)—but Capernaum also, (which, for being more unbelieving than Sodom, was to be hereafter “thrust down to Hell,”(*m*) and therefore must have been filled with surpassing wickedness,) contained this pattern of Humility, of Love, and above all of *Faith*. See the note on St. Luke vii. 5.

(*g*) St. John iv. 49.

(*k*) St. Matt. xi. 21, 22

(*h*) St. Mark v. 23.

(*l*) St. John i. 44.

(*i*) St. John xi. 21 and 32.

(*m*) St. Matt. xi. 23, 24.

The reader is referred to the note on St. John i. 44, for the obvious remark which facts like these suggest. Will men dare, in the face of such a history, to pass sweeping censures on large masses of persons? on the inhabitants of a whole village? Shall not these instances of transcendent goodness among a degraded people, rather induce a suspicion that *we* also may be living among unsuspected Saints? that Angels may be dwelling, unawares, (*n*) at *our* very doors?

11 And I say unto you that many shall come from the east and west, and shall sit down with Abraham and Isaac, and Jacob, in the Kingdom of Heaven:

"Sit down,"—because the joys of the Life to come are likened by our Lord to a Feast: (*n*) where the hungry are filled, and the thirst of parched and weary souls is quenched, (*p*) and where all joys abound. (*q*) A Coronation banquet,—where all are crowned kings: (*r*) while *without*, is Darkness,—"*outer* Darkness," as it is said in the next verse. But the comparison of Heavenly joy to an Earthly Feast, is but "a dark shadow of that bright glory." . . . "Oh, were the things of Eternity, the Misery and the Blessedness to come, indeed believed, how much would our thoughts be in them! and how little room would they leave for the trifles and vanities which our hearts are taken up with."

12 But the Children of the Kingdom shall be cast out into outer darkness:

"Darkness,"—because removed from the presence of God, who is *Light*. As the beloved Apostle speaks,—"*God is Light, and in Him is no Darkness at all.*" (*s*) It seems a fitting retribution, that those who, when *Light* came into the world, loved Darkness rather than *Light* *because their deeds were evil*," (*t*)—should hereafter suffer the penalty of a "Darkness which may be felt." (*u*)

there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

The Blessed Speaker here prophecies the abundant gathering in of the Gentiles into the Kingdom of Heaven,—and contrasts it with the final exclusion of many of the Jewish nation, by reason of their impenitence and unbelief. The same contrast will be found in St. Luke xiii. 28, 29,—with which last verse, Genesis xxviii. 14 should be compared.—The Jews were heirs of the promises made to Abraham,—and "Children of the kingdom," as our Lord here calls them;—and accordingly, to *them* were the first offers of Mercy and Salvation made. It came even to their very doors; but they put it from them. The wedding was ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy: (*v*) "and this near miss of Happiness" (as one hath well remarked.) "is the greatest misery."

"It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to *you*," said Paul and Barnabas, at Antioch in Pisidia, to their blaspheming Countrymen: "but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of everlasting Life,—lo, we turn to the Gentiles; for so hath the Lord commanded us." (*y*) And to the same effect, St. Paul spoke to the unbelieving Jews at Rome:—"Be it known therefore unto you, that the Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles: and"—he added a memorable prophecy,—"*they will hear it.*" (*z*) Our Lord had said the like,—in St. Matthew xxi. 43.

But, woe to us if we rise from the study of such passages as these, with a dry lifeless remark on the purely *historical* meaning of the words employed, as they regard Jew and Gentile. They reach much further than the destruction of the Holy City, and the subsequent destiny of the Nation which Christ came to save. The

(*n*) Hebrews xlii. 2.

(*o*) St. Matt. xxii. 4, &c. St. Luke xiv. 16, &c. xxii. 30. Rev. xix. 9. Compare also St. Luke xv. 23.

(*p*) Isaiah iv. 1 and lxxv. 13; St. Matt. v. 6; St. Luke vi. 21; Rev. vii. 16, quoted from Is. xlix. 10, &c.

(*q*) See the first note on St. Matt. vii. 13.

(*r*) Compare Rev. i. 6, and 2 Tim. iv. 8. St. James i. 12. Rev. ii. 10. iii. 11, &c.

(*s*) 1 St. John i. 5.

(*t*) St. John iii. 19.

(*u*) Exodus x. 21.

(*v*) See St. Matt. xxii. 8.

(*y*) Acts xiii. 46, 47.

(*z*) Acts xxviii. 28.

"Children of the Kingdom" are *we*,—as many of us as have the Gospel brought to our very doors; and *that* "outer darkness" will be *ours*, if, with splendid opportunities, abundant knowledge, and spiritual advantages of the very highest order, "we neglect so great Salvation."^(x)

The place of Suffering,—which is reserved for the wicked and impenitent,—is described in terms descriptive of the bitterest bodily anguish. Repentance, which comes too late, draws unavailing tears: and Despair, which shall have no end, causes the teeth to clench with agony. And take notice that such language cannot be called figurative; since "they that have done evil" will go *with their bodies* "into everlasting fire."

13 And JESUS said unto the Centurion, Go thy way; and as thou hast believed, *so* be it done unto thee. And his servant was healed in the self-same hour.

Showing that his Faith was *perfect*. Our Lord's words on this occasion are like those which He spoke to the two blind men, in St. Matt. ix. 29. The entire case resembles that of the "Nobleman," and should be compared with it. See St. John iv. 50 and 53.

But *did* the Centurion "Go his way?" Not so. He remained with CHRIST,—in perfect confidence that the object of his anxiety, whom he had left "ready to die,"^(y) was perfectly restored. See St. Luke vii. 10, and the note there.

"As thou hast believed—*so* be it done unto thee." The measure of Faith is ever made the measure of Blessedness. See above, on the words "I will; be thou clean,"—in verse 3.

14 And when JESUS was come into Peter's house, he saw his wife's mother laid, and sick of a fever.

We learn from this verse, incidentally, several facts concerning St. Peter. He was a citizen of Bethsaida,^(z) but his dwelling-place was Capernaum; for see ver. 5. The House belonged to himself and his brother Andrew:^(a) and the Apostle proves to have been a married man. St. Paul states the fact plainly: "Have we not power to lead about a sister, a wife, as well as other Apostles, and as the brethren of the Lord, and Cephas?"^(b)—which was the name bestowed by our SAVIOUR on Simon, when first the fisherman of Galilee was brought into His presence.^(c)

15 And He touched her hand, and the fever left her: and she arose, and ministered unto them.

This short but instructive miracle is related more particularly by St. Mark, i. 29 to 31, and St. Luke iv. 38, 39,—where see the notes; especially those on St. Mark's narrative.

16 When the even was come, they brought unto Him many that were possessed with devils: and He cast out the spirits with *His* word, and healed all that were sick:

See the note on St. Mark i. 32. What a cluster of marvels is recorded in this place!

"*All* that were sick!" We read of *none* that were disappointed,—*none* that were sent away unhealed. Now, "whatsoever things were written aforetime were written for our learning; that we, through patience and comfort of the Scripture, might have hope."^(d)

17 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the prophet, saying, Himself took our infirmities, and bare *our* sicknesses.

But the words of Esaias are—"Surely He hath borne our *griefs*, and carried our

(x) Heb. ii. 3.

(a) Compare St. Mark i. 29.

(y) St. Luke vii. 2.

(b) 1 Cor. ix. 5.

(d) Rom. xv. 4.

(z) St. John i. 44.

(c) St. John i. 42.

sorrows:"(c) and they clearly refer to the *sins* of mankind rather than to their sicknesses. St. Peter so quotes the Prophet, at the end of the second chapter of his First Epistle: "who His own self *bare our sins*."(f) This, then, is an example of *Divine Interpretation*;—one of the places where the SPIRIT has condescended to be His own Interpreter.

It is reasonable and becoming, here, to point out the close connection between sin and sickness; and to call to mind how nearly linked are moral evil and bodily ailment: but we must not presume, by such remarks, to explain, and as it were to *defend* the wondrous application of this text by the Evangelist. No one without the express warrant of God's Word to that effect, would have ever supposed,—or been warranted in supposing,—that Isaiah liii. 4 was fulfilled when our SAVIOUR cast out the Spirits from them that were possessed, and healed the sick. This application of the Scripture "*is the LORD'S doing*, and it is marvellous in our eyes."(g) See the notes on St. Mark ii. 5.

18 Now when JESUS saw great multitudes about Him, He gave commandment to depart unto the other side.

To cross the Lake,—from the Western to the Eastern shore.

19 And a certain Scribe came, and said unto Him, Master, I will follow Thee whithersoever Thou goest.

Concerning the Scribes, see the note on St. Mark iii. 22.

The attentive reader of the Gospel turns anxiously to the Note or Comment on all such passages as the present (ver. 19, 20,) and that which immediately follows, (ver. 21.)—in hopes of being informed *who* this Scribe, and *who* that Disciple, were? It is with a sense of disappointment that the reader finds his guide silent, and as much at a loss as himself, in the very place where information was wanted most.

He will be tempted to make the remark, that such passages of Scripture cannot have been written in vain. The two incidents before us were set on record for our learning,—and certainly with some higher purpose than merely to inflame our curiosity. He will call to mind an occurrence described in St. Mark's Gospel,—xiv. 51, 52;—and be disposed to maintain that he who pretends to comment on the Gospels ought to be prepared with an explanation of all such passages as these.

The plain truth is, that he who reads the Gospels most attentively, finds in them most to wonder at: for they are full of difficulties; not only obvious ones, (like the present,) but unexpected difficulties also. Now, a Commentary may well be required to be more or less satisfactory in discussing hard passages which involve *Doctrine*; because, in the statement of Doctrine, Holy Men have spoken plainly in all ages; and the *Tradition* of the Church, (as it is called,) has been uniform from the very beginning. Difficult idioms ought also to be explained; and the reader (if he be curious in such matters has further a right to require information in matters of History, Chronology, and Geography; since a little learning of the most ordinary kind, will, for the most part, supply all the help required. Above all, does it seem to be the business of Notes to call attention to precious sayings which might else escape notice: and to gather lessons of Divine Wisdom from the less prominent facts and allusions of the SPIRIT: for by this means the Word of God becomes the Bread of Life,—the very food and support of the soul. But *there* the skill of the Commentator ends. No one so curious as *he* to have the hidden things of the Gospel explained to him: but he finds a thick curtain spread over many of them, which no one yet has been enabled to remove.

That many things *yet* remain to be discovered in Holy Scripture, he firmly believes. That grounds of great probability can be offered for a guess, even at such places as the present, he knows. But after he has said this, he is glad to confess his own great ignorance.

He would fain be permitted, however, to add,—that there are things far better worth knowing than the present, which will be revealed to readers of Scripture

(c) Isaiah liii. 4.

(f) 1 St. Pet. ii. 21.

(g) Ps. cxviii. 23.

with no reading and little wit; who yet study the Book of Life with pure hearts, supremely desirous of discerning God in His Word.

And lastly, let it be stated that we should read the Gospels rather in order to feed upon their clear statements than to perplex ourselves with their dark places. It is a great snare of Satan to make men wonder and cavil where they ought to believe and obey. "While others *dispute*," (says the great Father of the Western Church,) "be it *mine* to *adore*."

20 And JESUS saith unto Him, The Foxes have holes, and the Birds of the air *have* nests; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay *His* head.

Words which we have read, and heard repeated, till they have perhaps ceased to move us: yet, inexpressibly affecting they surely are, on the lips of the Eternal Son,—the Word "made flesh!" . . . What a history do they discover, of weary days, and shelterless nights:—of houseless wanderings, and scanty supplies of food! The Chief Shepherd might have said with far more truth than Jacob, (who was but a feeble type of *Him*),—"In the day the drought consumed me, and the frost by night: and my sleep departed from mine eyes."^(h)

The title "Son of Man" is applied to our LORD by Himself in the Gospels, frequently; by His Apostles, never. He who was in the highest sense the Son of God,—and became the Son of Man only "for us men and for our Salvation,"—seems to have called Himself by this name in order to give His hearers to understand that it was He of whom the prophet Daniel spoke, in Daniel vii. 13. That the Jews understood the title, as denoting the MESSIAH, appears from St. John xii. 34,—where our LORD's words at the Feast of Tabernacles(ⁱ) are alluded to. He is found to have applied to Himself the prophecy of Daniel, just quoted, on two occasions: namely, in St. Matthew xxiv. 30, and xxvi. 64. See the second note on St. John v. 27.

21 And another of His Disciples said unto Him, LORD, suffer me first to go and bury my Father.

Here was a Disciple who drew back; and we shall find, in the next verse, that our SAVIOUR urged him forward. We have just witnessed a contrary spectacle: one who was for pressing forward, but whom our LORD kept back. . . . He has different ways of dealing with us, according to our different dispositions. The timid need reproof and encouragement,—the impetuous must be made to count the cost.

22 But JESUS said unto him, Follow Me; and let the dead bury their dead.

There is some uncertainty as to the exact meaning of this saying, and others like it, in the Gospels; and so long as that is the case, it is safer to gather the *general* lesson which they embody,—the teaching which they were certainly intended to convey to *ourselves*,—than to dispute about their precise meaning in the ears of the Disciples who heard them. That those who are living in a state of Sin, are *dead* in God's sight, we know from such passages as St. John v. 25. Rom. v. 14: vi. 11, 13: Ephes. ii. 1, 5. Colossians ii. 13. 1 Timothy v. 6. Rev. iii. 1, &c. It may therefore be, that this Disciple understood our LORD's words to signify, "Let those who are spiritually dead *so* excuse,—*so* employ themselves." But be this as it may, it is clear that CHRIST reproved the man for inventing delays,—when he should have simply followed the footsteps of the SAVIOUR. And this is ever the way with all of us. We profess love, and willingness, and good intentions: but there is always *something* which we think must be done *first*. We stand equally in need, therefore, of the reproof here recorded: and *that* may be the chief reason why it is recorded.

23 And when He was entered into a ship, His Disciples followed Him.

(h) Gen. xxxi. 40.

(i) St. John viii. 28.

Let us be well persuaded that *that* ship, and its little company,—with their LORD in the midst of them,—exhibits a lively type or emblem of the Christian Church: vexed with many storms,—yet safe, because blessed with the presence of CHRIST.

24 And, behold, there arose a great Tempest in the Sea, inasmuch that the Ship was covered with the waves:

That which happens to the body, befalls each of the members likewise. “Deep calleth unto deep,” saith the Psalmist. “All Thy waves and Thy billows are gone over me.”(k) “Thy wrath lieth hard upon me, and Thou hast afflicted me with all Thy waves.”(l) But to be tost by the billows is no proof of desertion, or even of danger.

but He was asleep.

The ship,—*covered with waves*; and CHRIST in the ship,—*asleep*! How true a picture of the Church's fortunes! How true a picture of the Church at *this*,—at *all* times! Is He therefore unconscious of the danger, because He is motionless? Is He therefore unaware of the storm, because He is asleep?—“I sleep,” He saith; “*but My heart waketh*.”(m) yea, rather, “He that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.”(n)

25 And His Disciples came to Him, and awoke Him, saying, LORD, save us: we perish.

As if the ship *could* perish which carried CHRIST! And yet this faithless conduct of the Disciples is ours at all times! Unless we can see signs and wonders we will not believe.(o) The language of the Disciples is that of the Church in the hour of danger,—slow of heart to believe God's promises,(p) and impatient of the storm. “Awake, why sleepest Thou, O LORD? Arise, cast us not off for ever. Wherefore hidest Thou Thy face?”(q)

26 And He saith unto them, Why are ye fearful, O ye of little faith? Then, He arose, and rebuked the Winds and the Sea;

Observe, that He first rebuked *them*,—afterwards the sea. With His head yet reclining “on the pillow,”(r) He reproached them for their “little faith.” “*Then* He arose.” . . . The storm which was raging in their hearts,—the confusion and excitement which He discovered *there*,—endangered their safety far more than the heaving billows of the Lake.

and there was a great calm.

“And so, in the soul, when all within is full of confusion and noise,—the heart working like a troubled sea, and finding no rest, either from its own persuasions or the most skillful speeches of others; but, amidst all, likely to be swallowed up or split in pieces: then, one word from CHRIST's mouth quiets all presently, and makes the soul calmer and smoother than the stillest water in the fairest day.” The words are Leighton's.

“A great calm!”—If the Miracles of our LORD have a typical and prophetic character, (as many of them doubtless have,) how full of deep and mysterious meaning, how full of comfort to troubled hearts,—are these few words! That ship and its little company, (among whom CHRIST was,) proves the emblem of the Ark of CHRIST's Church;—the stormy waters set forth the vexations of our present restless and unquiet life. What then is this mention of “a great calm,” but a prophecy of what will be hereafter; when “the waves of this troublesome world” shall have been exchanged for “a sea of glass, like unto crystal;”(s) and the present shifting scene, for that better Land where “the wicked cease from troubling, and . . . the weary be at rest?”(t)

(k) Ps. xlii. 7.

(l) Ps. lxxxviii. 7.

(m) Solomon's Song, v. 2.

(n) Ps. cxxi. 4.

(o) St. John iv. 48.

(p) Isaiah liv. 17.

St. Matt. xxviii. 20. &c.

(q) Psalm xlv. 23, 24.

(r) St. Mark iv. 38.

(s) Rev. iv. 6.

(t) Job iii. 17.

27 But the men marvelled, saying, What manner of man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him!

"Man" should be in italics,—for the word does not occur in the original. "Who?" "What manner of [being]?" is the question in all the three Gospels.

Not that they doubted who He was, or questioned His Divinity; but because so stupendous an act of power took them quite by surprise. They had seen Him cast out devils and cure diseases; they had even known the elements, in silent subjection to His sway, change their very nature; as when the water, at Cana's feast, became wine. But it was something quite strange and new to see the mad winds chained up at his rebuke; and the waves,—which, a moment before threatened to cover them,—stand motionless at His word.

28 And when He was come to the other side, into the country of the Gergesenes,

Our Lord had now crossed the Lake, and set foot on the Eastern Coast. The Country of the Gergesenes was so called from the city of Gergesa, which lay there. Hard by, was the city of Gadara. Hence, the same district is called "the Country of the *Gadarenes*" by St. Mark (v. 1), and St. Luke (viii. 26). See the last note on St. Matthew iv.

A wondrous narrative follows,—extending to the end of the present chapter. St. Mark and St. Luke have delivered the incident so much more fully than St. Matthew, that the reader is referred to the notes on those Gospels,—namely, St. Mark v. 1 to 20, and St. Luke viii. 26 to 40,—for many remarks on the entire miracle which cannot be introduced with equal fitness in this place.

there met Him two possessed with devils, coming out of the tombs, exceeding fierce, so that no man might pass by that way.

Take notice that these unclean spirits loved to haunt the tombs,—places which it was accounted pollution even to touch. See Numbers xix. 16; and consider St. Matthew xxiii. 27. To "remain among the graves, and lodge in the monuments," and "eat swine's flesh," (u)—had been, long before, pointed out by the Prophet, as marks of a people hateful in God's sight. The "tombs" spoken of resembled our *vaults* rather than ordinary graves: being recesses in the rock, whether natural or artificial; large enough to contain many persons.

29 And, behold, they cried out, saying, What have we to do with Thee, JESUS, Thou SON of GOD?

Here was a full confession of our SAVIOUR'S Godhead. "The devils also believe, and tremble. But wilt thou know, O vain man, that *Faith without Works is dead?*" (x)

Observe, that ever after the Temptation, the Devils *knew* CHRIST. Compare St. Luke iv. 34 and 41, and see the note on the former place.

Art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?

Compare St. Luke iv. 34. See also, the note on St. Luke viii. 31. How awful, and how terrible are these glimpses at the unseen World, and the history of the devils! The Human Race had been for so long a time expecting Salvation,—the evil angels Punishment. (y) And the very *sight* of the Holy One is torture to them,—the anticipation of their sentence!

For there will come a day, "*a time*," as these words remind us, when our SAVIOUR CHRIST, putting "all enemies under His feet," (z) shall bring to judgment the evil angels also. (a) They already know their sentence; and see, by anticipation, "the smoke of their torment ascending up for ever and ever." (b)

(u) Isaiah lxxv. 4.
(z) 1 Cor. xv. 25.

(x) St. James ii. 19, 20.
(a) Compare 1 Cor. vi. 3.

(y) 2 St. Peter ii. 4. St. Jude, ver. 6.
(b) Rev. xiv. 11.

30 And there was a good way off from them an herd of many swine feeding.

St. Mark informs us that there were about two thousand.^(c) Take note that, according to the Law, these creatures were unclean. See Leviticus xi. 8, compared with Deut. xiv. 8. Also Isaiah lxvi. 17.

31 So the devils besought Him, saying, If Thou cast us out, suffer us to go away into the herd of swine.

See what is said on St. Mark v. 12: and take notice that the devils promised themselves a gratification most nearly resembling *that* which they had till now enjoyed, by being permitted to take up their abode in the bodies of the most filthy of animals!

32 And He said unto them, Go.

Observe, that our LORD does not *send* the devils into the swine. He does but permit them to enter the herd of unclean creatures.

And when they were come out, they went into the herd of swine: and, behold, the whole herd of swine ran violently down a steep place into the sea, and perished in the waters.

Whether this was *the intention* of the devils, or not, does not appear. It may very well have been that the herd,—frenzied by the strange power which suddenly possessed them,—rushed over the cliff: unconscious that they were thereby defeating the object of their invaders. But see the second note on St. Mark v. 13.

If *so* it were, we should be reminded by this incident of the many occasions when the most bitter malice, and the most exceeding cunning, are found to have outwitted and over-reached themselves. Consider St. Matthew ii. 7, 8, &c.

33, 34 And they that kept them fled, and went their ways into the city, and told every thing, and what was befallen to the possessed of the devils. And, behold, the whole city came out to meet JESUS: and when they saw Him, they besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.

So true was that saying of the prophet,—“*When we shall see Him, there is no beauty that we should desire Him!*”^(d)

What a picture is here presented to us! The inhabitants of a whole city exploring the SAVIOUR of the World to “depart out of their coasts!” Yet had He come among them as a Benefactor; and delivered them from a terrible pest,—namely, the presence of a whole legion^(e) of devils: whose violence was such, that “no man might pass that way,” (ver. 28.) Thus He, whose baby-limbs were laid in a Manger, because there was no room for Him in the Inn:^(f)—whose Infancy was nursed in Egypt, because the savage King of Judaea sought His Life:^(g)—who was forced to save Himself by flight, from the murderous hands of His own fellow-townsmen,^(h)—and many a time was obliged to go from place to place in order to escape the violence of the very nation He came to save:⁽ⁱ⁾—who was at last betrayed by His Friend,—mocked, scourged, smitten, crowned with thorns, spitted on and Crucified: He, in the ordinary events of His every-day Life, experienced nothing but neglect, unkindness, and ingratitude. He walked the earth’s surface without a place “where to lay His head.”^(k) Men,—“*when they saw Him, —besought Him that He would depart out of their coasts.*”

(c) St. Mark v. 13.

(d) Isaiah liii. 2.

(e) St. Mark v. 9.

(f) St. Luke ii. 7.

(g) St. Matth. ii. 13, 14.

(h) St. Luke iv. 29, 30.

(i) St. John viii. 59: x. 31 and 39: xi. 53, 54, &c.

(k) See above ver. 20.

THE PRAYER.

GRANT, O LORD, we beseech Thee, that the course of this World may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER IX.

2 CHRIST curing one sick of the palsy. 9 Calleth Matthew from the receipt of custom. 10 Eateth with Publicans and Sinners. 14 Defendeth His Disciples for not fasting. 20 Cureth the bloody issue. 23 Raiseth from death Jairus' daughter. 27 Giveth sight to two blind men. 32 Healeth a dumb man possessed of a devil. 36 And hath compassion of the multitude.

1 AND He entered into a ship, and passed over, and came into His own City.

Our Blessed Lord, having wrought the great miracle in the country of the Gergesenes, (described in the former chapter,) entered again into *the* ship, and crossed over to the Western shore of the Lake.

"He who measures the waters in the hollow of His hand, and commands them," (a) says Leighton, "is ferried over in some boat or small vessel!"

"His own *Country*" was Nazareth: (b) "His own *City*" was Capernaum. See St. Mark ii. 1.—One of the ancients remarks beautifully,—“The CREATOR of all things, the LORD of the World, when He had, for our sakes, straitened Himself in the bonds of our flesh,—began to have His own country, as a man; began to be a citizen of Judæa, and to have Parents, (though Himself be Parent of all!) in order that Affection might attach to Him those whom Fear had separated.”

A most interesting narrative follows,—the cure of the Paralytic, borne of four. St. Matthew, however, relates this miracle so concisely, that his narrative would be scarcely intelligible without the help of the next two Evangelists. The reader is accordingly referred to St. Mark's Gospel,—chap. ii. 1 to 12; and to St. Luke v. 17 to 26, and to the notes on both places, for further information concerning this miracle.

2 And, behold, they brought to Him a man sick of the palsy,

The reader is referred to a long note on St. Mark ii. 3.

lying on a bed.

But St. Mark (c) and St. Luke (d) furnish many more particulars; as, that “they sought means to bring him in, and lay him before Him. And when they could not find by what way they might bring him in, because of the multitude, they went upon the housetop, and uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken it up, they let him down through the tiling, with his couch, into the midst before JESUS.” This was indeed a surprising act: wherefore the Evangelist proceeds,—

And JESUS seeing their faith said unto the sick of the palsy; Son, be of good cheer; thy sins be forgiven thee.

(a) St. Matthew viii. 26.
(c) St. Mark ii. 4.

(b) Compare St. Luke iv. 16 and 23, 24.
(d) St. Luke v. 19.

The reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 5.

"It is needless," says Leighton, "to dispute whether one may be benefited by another's Faith. Surely, much may be done by it. Thus, it may bring, and present a person; may recommend, may pray for him; and may be respected in the grant of Mercy,—not only in things temporal, but in spiritual matters also. And yet 'The Just' lives only *by his own Faith*,^(e)—which Faith, no doubt, this poor man had. For the word '*their*' excludes not, but rather includes, the sick man's,—who, no doubt, consented to the course they were pursuing, and shared their confidence."

3 And, behold, certain of the Scribes said within themselves, This man blasphemeth.

St. Matthew tells us not *what* Scribes these were. To understand the Evangelist's meaning, see St. Mark ii. 6: but St. Luke it is,—v. 17,—who makes the matter clearest of all.

"It is good," says Leighton, "to be in believing people's company.^(f) Another person, a city, a society, may fare the better for the faith of an Individual.^(g) Often, *one* who prays in a family, averts judgments, and draws down blessings upon the whole."^(h)

See the notes on St. Mark ii. 5, 6, and 7.

4 And JESUS knowing their thoughts said, Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?

"This," says Leighton, "without anything further, was enough to prove His Divine power. Oh, that this truth were ever before us, that all our thoughts are under His eye! If we knew that they were under the eye of some grave, wise man,—how wary and choice should we be of them! And shall we have less regard to our holiest and wisest LORD,—to whom they are all naked and open?"

"Wherefore think ye evil in your hearts?"—"There was *no* reason in the thing; but the truth was,—their hearts were evil; and so was everything which came out of them. An evil heart is an incessant forge of evil thoughts . . . Hence, that excellent advice of Solomon, 'Keep thy heart with all diligence.'⁽ⁱ⁾ To amend some evil customs, without the renewing of the heart, is but to lop the branches that will grow again. But a holy heart meditates on holy things; is still in Heaven; is all reverence towards God,—all meekness and Charity towards man."

See the notes on St. Mark ii. 8.

5 For whether is easier to say, *Thy* sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and walk?

That is,—Which of the two is the safer thing to say? Which claim is more easily set up;—the power to forgive Sin,—or the power to restore yonder palsied body to strength and motion?

6 But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on Earth to forgive sins, (then saith He to the sick of the palsy,) Arise, take up thy bed, and go unto thine house.

"Power on Earth," as opposed to "Power in Heaven." See the note on St. Mark ii. 10.

Thereby our SAVIOUR proved the reality of His Miracle, taking away from His enemies all pretence that it was any illusion. He also thereby showed them that He had not only healed this poor sufferer, but had given him *strength* as well. But the deepest truth He showed, and that which it most concerns *us* to observe, was, that He hath power not only to turn away souls from sin; but to give them strength

(e) Habakkuk ii. 4,—quoted by St. Paul three times: Rom. i. 17; Gal. iii. 11; Heb. x. 38.

(f) Compare Genesis xviii. 32. (g) See the notes on the first part of St. Luke v. 6.

(h) See St. James v. 16—and the places referred to in the margin of a reference Bible.

(i) Prov. iv. 23.

(k) Psalm cxix. 32.

afterwards to walk in the way of His Law. "I will run the way of Thy Commandments," says the Psalmist,—“when Thou *hast set my heart at liberty.*”(k)

7 And he arose, and departed to his house.

Our LORD proves what is invisible by what is visible. So he ever doth! He explains what is hard *indeed*, by what is comparatively easy. And yet, His enemies, in their folly, think that He is doing the very contrary of this.—See the note on St. Mark ii. 9.

8 But when the multitude saw *it*, they marvelled, and glorified God, which had given such power unto men.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 11, 13.

9 And as JESUS passed forth from thence, he saw a man, named Matthew, sitting at the receipt of custom :

“He staid no long time upon Earth, but He lost no part of that time. Every step, to us is a wonder of Goodness! And here is a cure which the Evangelist relates as done upon himself, which was not less, if not more wonderful than that performed upon the paralytic man: done as easily and quickly, and by the same means,—a word spoken!”

“*A man named Matthew.*” How humble and simple a way of speaking of himself! . . . Take notice, that the other Evangelists(l) call him *Levi*,—as the more honorable appellation, by which he was known to his brethren of the commonwealth of Israel. Observe also, that He who “*saw* . . . Simon called Peter, and Andrew his brother;” “and, going on from thence, *saw* other two brethren;”(m)—who also “*saw*” Nathaniel sitting under the fig-tree,(n) now “*saw* a man named Matthew;” and called him. “He spies us out,” says a good man, “when we think of nothing less.” Notice the language of St. Luke xxi. 2.

and He saith unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him.

So simply does St. Matthew relate his own call to Apostleship! He has reserved the account till now, in order that he may relate it in connection with the Feast which he made to his Divine Master; but, in reality, it happened long before. The Twelve had all been called before the Sermon on the Mount,—as appears from St. Luke vi. 15, compared with ver. 20 of the same chapter.

Concerning the call of St. Matthew, see more in the note on St. Mark ii. 14.

The reader is further referred to a note on the latter part of St. Matthew iv. 21. The ancients are fond of reminding us that the Apostle and Evangelist was called from the receipt of custom to be entrusted with a more precious “pound,” and ten more precious “talents.”

10 And it came to pass as JESUS sat at meat in the house,

“In *the house* :”—that is, *St. Matthew’s house*; “the house” so well known to himself! It is thus that men ever speak of what is their own. Compare St. Mark i. 11, and see the note there.

But St. Mark, fearing lest the Evangelist’s meaning might not be understood, says,—“as Jesus sat at meat in *his house* ;”(o) and St. Luke, to put the matter out of all doubt, says,—“in *his own house.*”(p)

behold, many Publicans and sinners came and sat down with Him and His Disciples.

Concerning “publicans and sinners,”—see the note on St. Mark ii. 15. To eat with such persons, was deemed a pollution: whence it follows,—

(k) Psalm cxix. 32.
(m) St. Matthew iv. 18, 21.
(o) St. Mark ii. 15.

(l) St. Mark ii. 14, and St. Luke v. 27.
(n) St. John i. 48.
(p) St. Luke v. 29.

11, 12 And when the Pharisees saw *it*, they said unto His Disciples, Why eateth your Master with Publicans and Sinners? But when JESUS heard *that*, He said unto them, They that be whole need not a Physician, but they that are sick.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 16, 17, for some remarks on these words.

13 But go ye and learn what *that* meaneth, I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice :

St. Matthew, addressing his Gospel especially to readers of his own nation, brings forward many more citations of the Old Testament Scriptures than the other Evangelists. Consider chap. i. 23 : ii. 15, 23 : iv. 15, 16 : viii. 17, &c.—The place here quoted from Hosea vi. 6, is quoted again in chap. xii. 7 ; and is clearly not intended to disparage Sacrifice ; but only to exalt Mercy above it. It runs as follows,—“ I desired Mercy and not Sacrifice ; and the knowledge of God *more than* burnt offerings,” (9)—where the latter clause of the sentence explains the former. For (in the words of an old English Archbishop,)—“ God does not condemn Sacrifice, but *Sacrifice without Mercy*” This is one of the many places where the Law contains a foretaste of the Gospel. Such are also 1 Samuel xv. 22. Isaiah i. 11 to 17 : lviii. 4 to 7. Micah vi. 6 to 8, &c.

Concerning the precept here conveyed, it has been well remarked by a good man, that—“ multiplying external sacrifices is no proof of progress in holiness ; but proficiency in Mercy, is always so.”

for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

“ Art thou an eminent sinner ? ” asks Leighton, “ then come to Him, for He came to thee. It is such that He comes to seek. They are the very objects of His Grace. He had nothing else to do in the World, but to save such. He came on purpose for their sakes. His very Name tells it : ‘ He shall be called JESUS, for He shall save His people from their sins.’ (7) Were it not strange if one should say, I am sick, very sick, therefore I will not address the Physician ? And to say, I am a sinner, and a great one, therefore I dare not go to the SAVIOUR of sinners,—would be equally strange.”

“ *Not the righteous, but sinners :* ” and so, just before, “ *Not Sacrifice, but Mercy.* ” Compare Proverbs viii. 10. Joel ii. 13. St. Mark ix. 37. St. Luke x. 20. St. John iii. 17 : v. 30 : vi. 27 : vii. 16 : ix. 3 : xii. 44, 47 : xiv. 24. Acts v. 4. Romans ii. 13. 1 Cor. vii. 10. 1 St. John iii. 18.—In all these places, the meaning seems to be *Not so much* the one, *as* the other : *Rather* the one, *than* the other : *Not only* the one, *but also* the other.

14 Then came to Him the Disciples of John, saying, Why do we and the Pharisees fast oft, but Thy Disciples fast not ?

15 And JESUS said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber mourn, as long as the Bridegroom is with them ? but the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken from them, and then shall they fast.

Take notice that our Lord here utters a great prophecy,—and makes one of the earliest allusions to His own approaching Death.

See the notes on St. Mark ii. 18, 19, 20 ; also on St. Luke v. 35, for several remarks on the preceding verses.

16, 17 No man putteth a piece of new cloth unto an old garment, for that which is put in to fill it up taketh from the garment, and the rent is made worse. Neither do men put new wine into old bottles :

(9) Hosea vi. 6.

(7) St. Matthew i. 21.

else the bottles break, and the wine runneth out, and the bottles perish: but they put new wine into new bottles, and both are preserved.

The reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 21, 22. Consider also St. Luke v. 39, and the note there.

18 While He spake these things unto them, behold there came a certain Ruler,

St. Matthew relates the raising of Jairus' daughter more concisely, by far, than either St. Mark or St. Luke. For example, he tells us neither the name of the Father,—nor what kind of "Ruler" he was. He describes also, in the very briefest manner, the wondrous miracle which our SAVIOUR performed by the way, on the Woman with the issue of blood,—verses 20 to 22.

The Reader is therefore referred to the notes on St. Mark v. 22 to 43, for the remarks which would be less conveniently offered here. See also the notes on St. Luke viii. 41 to 56.

and worshipped Him, saying, My Daughter is even now dead: but come and lay Thy Hand upon her, and she shall live.

Rather,—“My Daughter is by this time, dead;”—“must be dead by this time.” The Father had left his child in the very agony of death,—as the words of St. Mark v. 23, and the subsequent course of the History, (St. Mark v. 35,) clearly prove.

19 And JESUS arose, and followed him, and so did His Disciples.

20 And, behold, a woman, which was diseased with an issue of blood twelve years, came behind Him, and touched the hem of His garment:

What is here called a “hem,” (and is translated “border,” in St. Luke viii. 44,) is called a “*fringe*” in Numbers xv. 38 and 39;—where the divine command is recorded, in virtue whereof this ornament was worn by members of the Jewish nation. See the place. It is probable that this afflicted creature laid her hand on the “ribband of blue” which edged the outer garment of the SAVIOUR of the World, as considering that it possessed a peculiar sanctity.

See the note on St. Matt. xxiii. 5.

Observe, that the touch of such an one brought defilement;(s) which may, partly, have been the cause of her timid approach. But see the notes on St. Mark i. 41, and on the last half of St. Luke v. 13.

21 for she said within herself, If I may but touch His garment, I shall be whole.

She believed with her heart: she confessed with her lips:(t) she touched with her hand. By Faith,—Word,—and Deed, Salvation is obtained. St. Mark relates how immediate was her cure:—v. 29 to 32.

22 But JESUS turned Him about, and when He saw her, He said, Daughter, be of good comfort; thy faith hath made thee whole. And the woman was made whole from that hour.

Which means not the hour when “Jesus turned Him about,”—but the hour, or rather the instant, in which the afflicted woman touched His garment.

The entire incident is related with surprising conciseness by the present Evangelist. The Reader has been already referred to the Gospels of St. Mark,—v. 22 to 43; and St. Luke,—viii. 41 to 56.

(s) Leviticus xv. 27 to 29.

(t) Rom. x. 9 and 10.

23 And when JESUS came into the Ruler's house, and saw the minstrels and the people making a noise,

The house was full of hired mourners,^(u) and pipers, who, according to the Jewish custom played mournful music,—as an expression of sorrow for the departed. There is an allusion to this in Jeremiah xlviii. 36.

24 He said unto them, Give place: for the maid is not dead, but sleepeth. And they laughed Him to scorn.

Our SAVIOUR CHRIST thereby disarms Death of its terrors, reminding us that He is “the God of the living; for all live unto Him.”^(x)

See the note on St. Mark v. 39; and consider the following texts: 1 Thess. iv. 13, 14, 15. 1 Cor. xv. 6, 51.

25 But when the people were put forth, He went in, and took her by the hand, and the maid arose.

By His three miraculous acts of raising the dead, our Blessed LORD displayed before men's eyes the Doctrine of the Resurrection: teaching at the same time, that *Himself* is “the Resurrection and the Life.”^(y)

It has been also supposed that He thereby mystically set forth the purpose of His coming; which was, to raise up those who were dead in sins to a life of Righteousness. And such, indeed, is the frequent language of the SPIRIT; as when it is said,—“God, who is rich in Mercy, . . . when we were *dead in sins*, hath quickened us, . . . and raised us up.”^(z) And again,—“Awake thou that sleepest, and arise from the *dead*, and CHRIST shall give thee light.”^(a) Consider also such texts as the following, St. Matt. viii. 22. St. Luke xv. 24, 32. 1 Tim. v. 6. Coloss. ii. 13. Rev. iii. 1, &c.

It has been further pointed out, and with remarkable truth, that the three cases of raising the dead, recorded in the Gospels, aptly set forth three different conditions of the human soul, from which it may be raised by the quickening voice of CHRIST. It has either just sunk into Sin,—of which the present miracle would be typical: or its restoration may seem the more hopeless, from its having been already some time in that case,—of which the Widow of Nain's Son, on his way to burial, would be a lively figure;—or it may be, to all appearance, hopelessly lost,—of which Lazarus, who had lain four days in the grave, would be the sad type. Consider St. John v. 24, 25; and the note on the latter verse.

26 And the fame hereof went abroad into all that land.

We are next presented with two mighty miracles,—indicative, alike, of the days of the Gospel; concerning which, it has been said,—“Then the eyes of the *blind* shall be opened, . . . and the tongue of the *dumb* shall sing.”^(b)—the former of these two miracles,—(whereby our LORD restored to sight two blind men in the House,—is peculiar to the present Gospel: and seems to have immediately followed the transaction last related. It is the first miracle performed on the blind, described in the Gospels;—the others will be found in St. Matthew xii. 22: xx. 30 to 34: St. Mark viii. 22 to 26; and St. John ix. 1 to 7. See also St. Matthew xxi. 14. And take notice, that all such acts were but symbolical of the far higher purpose with which our SAVIOUR came into the World,—namely, to open the eyes of them whom Sin had blinded; and who, in a far deeper sense, are described in Scripture as walking in darkness,—sitting in the very shadow of Death. Consider the following texts:—Isaiah ix. 2: xlii. 7: xlix. 9. St. John ix. 39 to 41, &c. Ephes. v. 8, 14. Rev. iii. 17, 18. . . . How fitting then, was it, that He who opened the eyes of the blind, should have been called—“The LIGHT of the World!”^(c)

^(u) See the note on St. Mark v. 38.

^(x) St. Luke xx. 38.

^(y) St. John xi. 25.

^(z) Ephes. ii. 4, 5, 6.

^(a) Ephes. v. 14.

^(b) Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

^(c) St. John viii. 12, &c.

27 And when JESUS departed thence, two blind men followed Him, crying, and saying, *Thou* Son of David have mercy on us.

A cry which we make our own, daily, in the suffrages at the end of the Litany!

The same appellation is found on the lips of the Woman of Canaan, in chap. xv. 22; and it is heard from the two other blind men, at Jericho, in chap. xx. 30, 31:—a sufficient proof of the popular belief that “CHRIST cometh of the seed of David;” (*d*) as well as of the conviction of these afflicted persons, that JESUS of Nazareth was He. Compare chap. xii. 23: xxi. 9 and 15. Also i. 1.

It seems, then, that these two persons followed our SAVIOUR, with loud cries; but that our LORD pursued His way to the House, as if regardless of their need. Compare with this our LORD’s treatment of the woman of Canaan. (*c*)

28 And when He was come into the house, the blind men came to Him:

That is, they followed our Blessed SAVIOUR into the house which he inhabited at Capernaum: mentioned in chap. xiii. 1, 36, &c.: probably, Simon Peter’s. Our SAVIOUR wrought His miracles in all places,—in the street, and in the house; amid festivity and beside the grave; in crowds and before few persons; in the Synagogue, and in the private chamber,—as if to remind us that we are in every place alike objects of His Love; and may every where become the objects of His Mercy.

Take notice, that these men had believed, *by hearing* only: for the Voice of CHRIST, and the report of Him, was all that could have reached them. They had *seen* no wonder wrought by His Hands, nor, as yet, beheld the Majesty of His Person. Their case, therefore, in some respects, resembles our own But “Blessed are they *that have not seen*, and yet have believed.” (*f*) And how severe a reproof was administered by their Faith to the stiff-necked people who had so long beheld the Miracles of CHRIST in vain!

and JESUS saith unto them, Believe ye that I am able to do this? They said unto Him, Yea, LORD.

Not that our LORD *required* this assurance. “He needed not that any should testify of men: for he knew what was in Man.” (*g*) But he asked the question, in order to draw from the blind men a confession of their Faith: “for with the heart, man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth, confession is made unto Salvation.” (*h*) Perhaps, also, this may have been done for the sake of some who were present. See the note on St. Mark v. 9; and on the latter part of ver. 30.

29 Then touched He their eyes, saying, According to your faith be it unto you.

The result proved their faith to be perfectly earnest and sincere, And let it here once more be noted that the measure of Faith is ever the measure of Blessedness. Strange to say, it is this only which prescribes a limit to Divine Love! Compare St. Matthew xiii. 58, with St. Mark vi. 5; and consider Acts xiv. 9. See also the first note on the last part of St. Matth. viii. 3.

Our LORD’s action on this occasion, was repeated in the case of the two blind men at Jericho; (*i*) while His words closely resemble those which He addressed to the Centurion at Capernaum,—chap. viii. 13; where see the note.

30 And their eyes were opened;

“I will give Thee,” saith ALMIGHTY GOD, “to open the blind eyes; to bring out the prisoners from the prison; and them that sit in darkness, out of the prison-house.” (*k*) Compare the last words of Isaiah lxi. 1, with the last words of St. Luke iv. 18.

(*d*) St. John vii. 42.

(*f*) St. John xx. 29.

(*i*) St. Matthew xx. 34.

(*c*) St. Matthew xv. 22, 23, compared with St. Mark vii. 24

(*g*) St. John ii. 25.

(*h*) Isaiah xlii. 7.

(*k*) Romans x. 10

And JESUS straitly charged them, saying, See *that* no man know *it*.

With the injunction which our LORD proceeded to deliver, compare what He said to the Leper, in St. Mark i. 44: and to the deaf man with an impediment in his speech, in St. Mark vii. 36. See also the first note on St. Matthew viii. 4; and the notes on St. Mark i. 44, 45.

Holy Scripture is wondrous brief at all times. To fill up the sketch is ever left for ourselves. Do but think of the wondrous scene which must have followed an incident like this! The men,—rewarded for their Faith to the utmost extent of their desires,—suddenly find themselves face to face with their Benefactor. What must have been their surprise, their joy, their gratitude, their awe! “I have heard of Thee” (say they) “with the hearing of the ear; but now,—mine eye *seeth* Thee!” (l)

The rapture of prisoners set free from a gloomy prison-house, must have been theirs: and it seems to have been excessive,—for see the next verse, and the note upon it.

31 But they, when they were departed, spread abroad His fame in all that country.

There had been perfect Faith, therefore; but there was not perfect Obedience. The consequence here described is found to have also ensued upon all occasions referred to in the foregoing note: and yet, from the remarkable word which the Evangelist uses, (and which we translate “straitly charged,”) it would appear that these men were violating a most earnest, emphatic command. The word recurs in St. Mark xiv. 5, and St. John xi. 33, 38.

It had been foretold by the Prophet, that, in the days of MESSIAH, not only should “the eyes of the blind be opened,” but “the *tongue of the dumb* should sing.” (m) A miracle performed on a dumb person comes next.

32 As they went out, behold, they brought to Him a dumb man possessed with a devil.

Observe how closely this miracle follows on the heels of the other. A bloody issue,—Death,—blind eyes,—and dumb lips: what an assemblage of marvels, in close succession, does one short chapter contain!

The present appears to have been a very extraordinary display of Almighty Power: but it is recorded with singular brevity. Observe that the sufferer was “brought” to CHRIST. He was possessed by what is called in St. Mark ix. 17, “*a dumb spirit*.”

33 And when the devil was cast out, the dumb spake: and the multitude marvelled, saying, It was never so seen in Israel.

It would appear, from this mention of the multitudes, that our SAVIOUR did not work this miracle, like the preceding, privately, and in the House.

We read here of no questioning on the part of our LORD: no act of Faith on the part of the sufferer. The Great Physician simply heals the afflicted person whom another brings. And it is because the man was the sport of an evil spirit's malice,—who had bound up his will, and left him scarcely, (if at all,) responsible for his actions.—The same course was pursued by our LORD on all similar occasions.

34 But the Pharisees said, He casteth out devils through the Prince of devils.

We shall find the same blasphemous charge brought against our LORD, and by the same persons, in chap. xii. 24,—on the occasion of His casting out the devil from the man possessed, blind and dumb. See the note on St. Mark iii. 22.

Observe the last resource of unbelief. As long as the Pharisees can *deny* our LORD's miracles, they do so. See St. John ix. 18. When denial is simply impos-

(l) Job xlii. 5.

(m) Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

sible, they set about *explaining them away*. And do we not witness the same thing at the present day among ourselves?

35 And JESUS went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom, and healing every sickness and every disease among the people.

Thus briefly, once more, does the Evangelist describe our LORD's second great Ministerial Journey!—He repeats almost the very words which he had used to describe the former one,—in chap. iv. 23; whither the reader is referred.

The Shepherd and Bishop of Souls thus went after “the lost sheep of the House of Israel.” A warning to us, that *we* also must “go about,”—go *after* that which has gone astray, and seek to recover that which is lost.

St. Peter, summing up in a single sentence the History of our SAVIOUR's Life, uses words admirably descriptive of what is intimated in this place: namely,—“How GOD anointed JESUS of Nazareth with the HOLY GHOST and with Power: who went about *doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil*; for GOD was with Him.”(n)

36 But when He saw the multitudes, He was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no Shepherd.

Marvellous is the constancy of Holy Scripture. This image will be found to recur in Numbers xxvii. 17: 1 Kings xxii. 17: Jeremiah xxiii. 1 to 4, and l. 6: Ezekiel xxxiv. 5, 6, &c. . . These poor sheep, who had followed our Blessed LORD on the occasion mentioned in the last verse, were still hanging on the Divine footsteps of their Benefactor; exhausted in body, and scattered from their homes.

37 Then saith He unto His Disciples, the harvest truly *is* plenteous, but the labourers *are* few;

Compare St. John iv. 35, and the note there.

38 pray ye therefore the LORD of the Harvest, that He will send forth labourers into His Harvest.

This, in effect, we do daily, when we say “Thy Kingdom come.”—Compare St. Matthew xiii. 30.

Verses 37, 38 of this Gospel,—which describe what our LORD said, on sending forth His Twelve Apostles to preach,—recur, word for word, in St. Luke x. 2; and are found to have been spoken also at the sending out of the Seventy Disciples.

THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, we beseech Thee graciously to behold this Thy Family, for which our LORD JESUS CHRIST was contented to be betrayed, and given up into the hands of wicked men, and to suffer death upon the Cross; who now liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, ever one GOD, World without end. Amen.

(n) Acts. x. 33.

CHAPTER X.

1 CHRIST sendeth out His twelve Apostles, enabling them with power to do miracles.
 5 Giveth them their Charge, teacheth them. 16 Comforteth them against persecutions.
 40 And promiseth a blessing to those that receive them.

1 AND when He had called unto Him His twelve Disciples, He gave them power *against* unclean Spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease.

The concluding verses of the preceding chapter(*a*) prepare the Reader for this famous incident,—namely, the first sending forth of the Twelve Apostles, armed with miraculous powers which had been immediately delegated to them by their LORD. St. Matthew, because he had not yet given their names, proceeds to recount them. The Reader is requested to refer to what has been already remarked on this subject in the note on St. Mark iii. 14, 15.

2, 3, 4 Now the names of the twelve Apostles are these; the first, Simon, who is called Peter, and Andrew his brother; James *the son* of Zebedee, and John his brother; Philip, and Bartholomew; Thomas, and Matthew the publican; James, *the son* of Alphæus, and Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus; Simon the Canaanite, and Judas Iscariot, who also betrayed Him.

It seems needless to add anything in this place, to what has been already offered at some length, concerning these Twelve great names, in the notes upon St. Mark's Gospel,—chap. iii. 16 to 19. No attentive reader can fail to be struck by the preference which St. Matthew here gives to his brother-Apostle St. Thomas, (whom he names before himself;) or the humility which led him to attach to his own name a record of the reproachful calling which he had once pursued,—“Matthew *the Publican*.” Concerning the three names of chief difficulty, Lebbæus or Thaddæus, (who was Jude, our SAVIOUR's cousin,)—James the son of Alphæus,—and Simon the Cananite, (incorrectly written “the *Canaanite*,”) it must suffice to refer to another part of this Commentary(*b*).

St. Mark relates that the Twelve were sent forth “by two and two.”(*c*) St. Matthew accordingly will be found to enumerate the Apostles *in pairs*. Does he perchance thereby inform us which of them were companions? It seems probable; for the brothers are mentioned together; and Philip's name is linked with that of his beloved Nathanael. Simon the Zealot, be it observed, is the companion of one to whom his own warm spirit failed to communicate life and heat, and for whom it would have been good if he had never been born(*d*).

5, 6 These twelve, JESUS sent forth, and commanded them, saying, Go not into the way of the Gentiles, and into *any* city of the Samari-

(*a*) St. Matthew ix. 36 to 38.
 (*c*) St. Mark vi. 7.

(*b*) See St. Mark iii. 16 to 19.
 (*d*) St. Matthew xxvi. 24.

tans enter ye not: but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

So begins our LORD's first Charge to the Twelve; which St. Matthew here gives far more fully than either St. Mark^(c) or St. Luke.^(f) The offer of Salvation was to be made first to *the Jews*. To them alone had our LORD been sent; as He Himself declared in language which strongly recalls the present, when a Woman of *Canaan* implored His Mercy.^(g) If sometimes those who were aliens from the Commonwealth of Israel pressed forward, and,—like the Woman just noticed, or like the Centurion of Capernaum,—in reward of their Faith, succeeded in carrying away a blessing, such cases form a rare exception to the rule which God's Providence had laid down; and in conformity with which the Disciples are found to have acted even after our LORD's Ascension. The notices of their practice in this respect are frequent and interesting.^(h) Then, however, their Commission was,—“Go, teach *all Nations!*”⁽ⁱ⁾

Samaria, though lying in the very heart of Palestine, is yet reckoned with “the Gentiles;” having been peopled chiefly by the “strange nations” of the East whom the Assyrian King Shalmaneser transplanted into the country, after the carrying away of the Ten Tribes.^(k) Its inhabitants were accordingly termed “Strangers.”^(l) Shortly after our LORD's Ascension, however, it “received the Word of God” by the preaching of Philip the Deacon; whereupon “the Apostles which were at Jerusalem sent unto them Peter and John.”^(m) “Ye shall be witnesses unto Me,” (said CHRIST to His Apostles, after His Resurrection,) “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, *and in Samaria*, and unto the uttermost part of the earth.”⁽ⁿ⁾

7 And as ye go, preach, saying, the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand.

Take notice that this, which had been the Baptist's message,^(o) and our SAVIOUR's also,^(p) became now, in turn, the message of the Twelve. How secretly and silently,—how suddenly too, and in what an unlooked for manner,—did this offer of the Kingdom come to all! How entirely was the appeal made to the ear of Faith, when those six pair of Holy Brethren,—armed with supernatural powers indeed, yet rude of speech, and poorly clad,—made their first circuit of the Towns of Galilee! They carried no promises, either of present Glory or of future Conquest;—held out no soothing hopes, either of earthly Prosperity, or of temporal Abundance; but preached Repentance and Amendment of Life,—and the actual Advent of MESSIAH;—told of a cross to be borne, and a crown to be won; but pointed for the fulfillment of all God's promises to a period yet future; with trembling hands, guided the eyes which would *see* the King in His Beauty, to the Land which is very far off.^(q)

In the mean time, it is discovered that their LORD, in His Wisdom, had imparted to His Disciples as yet but a very partial view of the nature of that Kingdom which He sent them forth to proclaim. Nay, at a much later period, we find Him delivering a parable “because they thought that the Kingdom of God should immediately appear.”^(r) They clung to the notion of a glorious temporal Kingdom, and to the Reign of MESSIAH here on Earth, to the very last.^(s) This expectation lay at the root of the question which four of their number put to our SAVIOUR on the Mount of Olives;^(t) and even after the Resurrection, they are found to inquire,—“LORD, wilt Thou at this time restore again the Kingdom to Israel?”^(u)

From all which, it is plain that these great Saints enjoyed, at first, no supernatural light; were endued with no extraordinary powers of spiritual vision. God dealt with them as He deals with ourselves. Their advantages were even, (in a manner,) less than our own; for they had to accustom themselves by slow degrees to the glories of the Gospel. As men who have lived long in darkness cannot at

(c) St. Mark vi. 8 to 11.

(f) St. Luke ix. 3 to 5.

(g) St. Matthew xv. 24.

(h) Acts ii. 39; xi. 19; xiii. 46; xviii. 6.

(i) St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

(k) 2 Kings xvii. 6, 21; concerning the Samaritans, see more in the notes on St. John iv.

(l) St. Luke xvii. 16, 18.

(m) Acts viii. 5 and 14.

(n) Acts i. 8.

(o) St. Matthew iii. 2.

(p) St. Matthew iv. 17.

(q) Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

(r) St. Luke xix. 11.

(s) See St. Matthew xx. 21; St. Mark x. 37.

(t) St. Matthew xxiv. 3.

(u) Acts i. 6.

once distinguish objects when they are brought into the Light, even so it seems to have fared with them. With such a limited conception of their Divine Master's meaning, then, did the Twelve receive His command to "preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand."

8 Heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils: freely ye have received, freely give.

GOD had always armed those whom He sent forth on such a service, with miraculous powers,—as a token and witness of their Divine Commission. The Eternal SON proves those powers to be inherent in Himself, as God, by communicating them to whom He will: to the Twelve Apostles, in this place; to the Seventy Disciples, in another.(x) The gifts of healing which He delegated to the Twelve were symbolical of their spiritual function; in the exercise of which, He here warns them against the seductions of covetousness.(y) As they had received from Him, "without money and without price," so were they commanded to impart to others without stint, and without fee. And Judas was one of those on whose ears the words of this caution fell!

9, 10 Provide neither gold, nor silver, nor brass in your purses, nor scrip for *your* journey, neither two coats, neither shoes, nor yet staves: for the workman is worthy of his meat.

Instead of shoes they were to wear sandals.(z) A single staff they might bear in their hands,(a)—but another might not be carried in reserve. In which directions, *who* sees not that there is something of deep and mysterious import? A provision of bread in the scrip, or wallet, was likewise forbidden,—“for” (says our LORD,) “the Workman is worthy of his meat.” Nor might any provision of money be carried in the purse; and thereby He ordained (as St. Paul assures us,) “that they which preach the Gospel, should live of the Gospel.”(b)

This last sanction, the Church holds to be of abiding weight and efficacy. Shall then the former precepts be regarded as abrogated in their spirit, as well as in their letter? Doubtless our SAVIOUR'S Charge to the first Preachers of His Gospel,—over and above its literal and symbolical teaching to the men of that generation, and the individuals to whom it was originally addressed,—must be understood to convey to so many as shall ever enter His service, a perpetual warning against Covetousness, Luxury, and Worldly Anxiety.

11 And into whatsoever city or town ye shall enter, inquire who in it is worthy: and there abide till ye go thence.

Which proves that the miraculous powers with which they were endowed, were limited. They cannot discern *who* is worthy, by any spiritual faculty of their own; but must make inquiry, as ordinary travellers do.

12 And when ye come into an house, salute it.

Probably, with the salutation,—“Peace be to this house!” as in St. Luke x. 5; which explains the meaning of the words which follow:—

13 And if the house be worthy, let your peace come upon it: but if it be not worthy, let your peace return to you.

Take notice how those words of Christian salutation are spoken of as carrying with them a reality of blessedness. The word must *prosper* in the thing whereto it is sent; or, (like the dove sent forth too soon from the Ark,) must *return*—void.(c)

(x) St. Luke x. 19.

(a) St. Mark vi. 8.

(c) Isaiah lv. 11; compare for the expression, Psalm xxxv. 13.

(y) Compare Exodus xviii. 21.

(b) 1 Cor. ix. 14.

(z) St. Mark vi 9.

14, 15 And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear your words, when ye depart out of that house or city, shake off the dust of your feet. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom and Gomorrha in the Day of Judgment, than for that City.

We find St. Paul and Barnabas fulfilling this command, at Antioch in Pisidia,^(d) when the people of that city expelled them out of their coasts. To "shake off the dust of the feet" seems clearly an emblematic act; showing that God would, in like manner, reject the persons who did such things. And the dust was "a witness of the toil of the journey which the preachers had sustained." "Doubtless," says one, "the higher a people rise, under the means of grace, the lower they fall if they miscarry."

From this place, to the end of the chapter, is one continuous prophecy of the dangers and hardships to which the first preachers of the Gospel were to be exposed; mingled, however, with words of unearthly counsel, and comfort,—with wondrous promises of support, and most precious assurances of Love. By foretelling the evils which were to befall them, their Divine Master both convinced them of His knowledge of the future, and prepared them to encounter it with fortitude, as well as to meet it without surprise. It is observable, however, (from the tenor of verses 17, 18, 23, &c.) that our Lord's prediction, in this place, of what was to befall His Disciples, looks forward many years. Compare verses 17 to 22, and verse 30, with St. Luke xxi. 12 to 17, and verse 18: take note that the latter passage has reference to events subsequent to the Ascension; and then consider how the words of the Divine Speaker even seem to stretch out beyond the present, to embrace the remote future in their wondrous span!

16 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.

Sheep and Wolves,—the Serpent and the Dove: these are constant types in Holy Scripture of meekness and rapacity,^(e)—of subtlety^(f) and innocence!^(g) But it concerns us most to notice how pointed is the command, in this place, that Christian men should combine a cautious and wary course of action, with perfect innocence of life and manner: for "here," (as a good man has written,) "are the two arms defensive of a Christian: Prudence against the evils of men,—Innocence against the arts of the Devil, and all that relates to his Kingdom." Christian Prudence, therefore, and Christian Simplicity, are to be the weapons of our warfare.

"When you can avoid it, suffer not men to ride over your heads, or trample you under foot: *that* is the wisdom of Serpents. And so must we; that is, by all just compliances, and toleration of indifferent changes in which a duty is not destroyed, and in which we are not active, so preserve ourselves, that we might be permitted to live, and serve God, and to do advantages to religion; so, purchasing time to do good in And this is the direct meaning of St. Paul,—'See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil:'^(h) that is, purchase as much respite as you can; buy or 'redeem the time,' by all honest arts."⁽ⁱ⁾ St. Paul himself practised what he here recommends, when he divided his judges, (who were partly Sadducees, partly Pharisees,) by proclaiming himself to belong to the latter sect:^(k) also, when he appealed unto Cæsar.^(l) Bishop Taylor, whose words have been just now quoted, has left five sermons on this text: in the first three of which he enumerates the several points of Christian Prudence; in the last three, of Christian Simplicity.

17, 18 But beware of men: for they will deliver you up to the councils, and they will scourge you in their synagogues; and ye shall be

(d) Acts xiii. 51.

(e) Isaiah xi. 6: lxx. 25. St. Matthew vii. 15. St. John x. 12. Acts xx. 29.

(f) Genesis iii. 1.

(g) St. Luke iii. 22.

(h) Ephes. v. 15, 16; with which compare by all means Coloss. iv. 5: "Walk in wisdom toward them that are without, *redeeming the time.*"

(i) Bishop Taylor.

(k) Acts xxiii. 6.

(l) Acts xxv. 11.

brought before governors and kings for My sake, for a testimony against them and the Gentiles.

Rather, "in order that you may bear testimony before them."

19, 20 But when they deliver you up, take no thought how or what ye shall speak: for it shall be given you in that same hour what ye shall speak. For it is not ye that speak, but the Spirit of your Father which speaketh in you.

It is easy to imagine the fame which words like these must have acquired in the early ages of the Church: how precious they must have been to every one who went forth to preach the Gospel of CHRIST, and with what jealousy they must have been regarded by as many as opposed themselves to the Divine message. St. Paul has left us a striking confirmation of this remark in his Epistle to the Corinthians, who, (he informs us,) "*sought a proof of CHRIST speaking in him.*(*m*)" "His letters," they said, "are weighty and powerful; but his bodily presence is weak, and his speech contemptible."*(n)*

21 And the Brother shall deliver up the Brother to death, and the Father the Child: and the Children shall rise up against *their* Parents, and cause them to be put to death.

"Wrongs which we suffer from strangers," (says a very old writer,) "pain us less than those we suffer from men on whose affections we had counted; for besides the bodily affliction, there is then the pain of lost affection." "This," (adds another,) "we often see in persecutions; nor is there any true affection between those whose faith is different."

22 And ye shall be hated of all *men* for My Name's sake: but he that endureth to the end shall be saved.

"For Virtue is not to begin, but to complete:" "and the reward is not for those that begin, but for those that bring to an end." So far, two ancient writers. The importance attached in Holy Scripture to *perfect* works,—perseverance till "*it is finished*,"—to *endurance to the end*,—is far greater than might be supposed by those who have never attended to the circumstance.

23 But when they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another: for verily I say unto you, Ye shall not have gone over the cities of Israel, till the Son of Man be come.

In conformity with this precept, we find St. Paul escaping from Damascus to Jerusalem;*(o)* and again flying from Iconium to Lystra.*(p)* Our Blessed Lord illustrated His precept by His example when He retired from Nazareth to Capernaum;*(q)* and from one village of Samaria to another;*(r)* and again, when He withdrew to a city called Ephraim, bordering on the wilderness.*(s)* Consider also St. John viii. 59, and x. 39, 40.

The concluding words of the present verse are somewhat more difficult. Let it be observed, however, that it is safest always to interpret the "Coming of the Son of Man" of the *Final Advent* of CHRIST to Judgment:*(t)* and then, it will appear that our Lord's words in this place amount to a prophecy that after the Gospel has been preached to the Gentiles, and before the ancient people of God have been entirely reclaimed to the Gospel, the end of the World will arrive.

24, 25 The Disciple is not above *his* Master, nor the Servant above

(*m*) 2 Cor. xiii. 3.

(*n*) 2 Cor. x. 10.

(*o*) Acts ix. 25.

(*p*) Acts. xiv. 6

(*q*) St. Luke iv. 28 to 31.

(*r*) St. Luke ix. 51 to 56.

(*s*) St. John xi. 53, 54.

(*t*) As in St. Matthew xvi. 27: xxiv. 27: xxvi. 64. See however the notes on St. Matthew xvi. 28, and St. John xxi. 22.

his Lord. It is enough for the Disciple that he be as his Master, and the Servant as his Lord. If they have called the Master of the House Beelzebub, how much more *shall they call* them of His household!

It will be remembered that "The Master of the House" was thus blasphemously addressed in St. Matthew xii. 24: also in St. Matthew ix. 34.(u) *One*, at least, of His household is known from the sacred record to have shared his Master's reproach; namely, St. John Baptist. See St. Luke vii. 33, and the note there.

The next eight verses are found to recur in quite a different connection in St. Luke's Gospel,—xii. 2 to 9: affording one of the many striking proofs which the Gospels contain that the same sayings were for ever heard from the lips of our SAVIOUR. Here, they are addressed to the Twelve Apostles; there, they are clearly addressed to a multitude: and it should not escape our notice that even in the first instance, the mode of expression is such that it is equally applicable to all Believers,—may be made the common property of all ranks of men, alike.

26 Fear them not therefore: for there is nothing covered, that shall not be revealed; and hid, that shall not be known.

This seems to be a proverbial saying; which conveys, (and is doubtless meant to convey,) many meanings. As it stands, it most likely implies the same thing which the Psalmist expresses in a certain place: "Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in Him: and He shall bring it to pass. And He shall bring forth thy Righteousness as the Light, and thy judgment as the noon-day."(x) St. Paul, if he does not actually allude to the words of our SAVIOUR, seems to supply an admirable commentary upon them, when, (after declaring himself and Apollos to be "Ministers of Christ, and Stewards of the mysteries of God,") he warns the Corinthians against judging him "before the time, until the LORD come,—*who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts*; and then shall every man have praise of God."(y)

27 What I tell you in darkness, *that* speak ye in light: and what ye hear in the ear, *that* preach ye upon the housetops.

This is said with obvious reference to the style of building in Judæa, where "the housetop" afforded a convenient place for such an act as our LORD describes: (z) and there may be an allusion to the practice of the Jewish Teachers, who are said to have dictated softly in the ear what an Interpreter immediately after delivered aloud. But the general teaching of the place seems to be, that whatsoever the Apostles had conveyed to themselves under a figure, *that* they were without a figure to preach to all: what they had been taught secretly, *that* they were openly to proclaim: what they had heard in a corner of Judæa, *that* they were to make known all over the world.

28 And fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul:

"He does not hold out to them deliverance from death," (says an ancient Archbishop,) "but encourages them to despise it; which is a much greater thing than to be rescued from death. Thus did this discourse of our LORD aid in fixing in their minds the doctrine of Immortality."

but rather fear Him which is able to destroy both soul and body in Hell.

"This cannot be," (as an ancient Father remarks,) "before the soul is so joined to the body, that nothing may sever them. Yet is it rightly called the death of the soul, because it then does not live of God: and the death of the body, because though man does not cease to feel, yet because this his feeling has neither pleasure,

(u) See also St. John vii. 20: viiii. 48, 52: x. 20.

(y) 1 Cor. iv. 5.

(x) Psalm xxxvii. 5, 6.

(z) See the note on St. Luke v. 19.

nor health, but is a pain and a punishment, it is better named death than life." Take notice, however, that at the end of the verse, a different word is employed from that which was used in the beginning of it. In Hell, the body is not "*killed*." Our LORD speaks of "the second death" (a) as a continued *destroying* of the body and the soul. It is "everlasting destruction;" (b)—as St. Paul, in a certain place, speaks. See the note on St. Mark ix. 48.

The statement which follows proclaims a truth unsuspected by the heathen world.

29, 30 Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Our ears,—our lips, it may be,—are familiar with these wondrous declarations of our SAVIOUR respecting the minuteness of His Providence; yet may it well be suspected that very few are at the pains to realize His words in their daily lives. Strange, that a statement which invests every minute event with dignity and importance should affect men so little! It has been truly observed by a living writer, that—"not till belief in these declarations, in their most literal sense, becomes the calm and settled habit of the soul, is Life ever redeemed from drudgery and dreary emptiness; and made full of interest, meaning, and Divine significance."

31 Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows.

Should not our hearts assume the posture of reverent attention, as often as the Author of Creation is pleased to make *any* revelation,—to present us with *any* comment,—on the mysterious beings which surround us; those irrational creatures of His, concerning which so little is known, because so little has been revealed? Compare this place with St. Matthew vi. 26, and xii. 12.

32 Whosoever therefore shall confess Me before men, him will I confess also before My FATHER which is in Heaven.

Whereon a famous Bishop remarks,—“True indeed it is that the great promises of the Gospel are made unto Faith; and glorious things are spoken of it. But the same promises are made to the *Confession* of Faith together with it.” (c) For it is “with the mouth that confession is made unto salvation.” (d)

Nor must men confess Him with their lips only, but in their lives; in deed as well as in word. The Apostle, speaking of some in his days, remarks—“they profess that they know God; but in works they deny Him, being abominable, and disobedient, and unto every good work reprobate.” (e) and our LORD has spoken most clearly and solemnly concerning the fate of those who do such things. (f) They, on the contrary, who confess CHRIST as plainly to show that they firmly believe in Him as their SAVIOUR, their Mediator, and their Advocate, enjoy the benefit of that Intercession which He is declared to be eternally making for those who come unto God by Him. (g) He confesses them before the FATHER,—confesses that they belong to Him; and, (as He has Himself solemnly spoken,)—“*I pray for them.*” (h)

33 But whosoever shall deny Me before men, him will I also deny before My FATHER which is in Heaven.

To which words of our SAVIOUR CHRIST, St. Paul clearly refers in his second Epistle to Timothy: “If we suffer, we shall also reign with Him; *if we deny Him, He also will deny us.*” (i)

34 Think not that I am come to send peace on Earth: I came not to send peace, but a sword.

(a) Rev. xxi. 8.

(d) Romans x. 10.

(g) Hebrews vii. 25.

(b) 2 Thess. i. 9.

(e) Titus i. 16.

(h) St. John xvii. 9.

(c) Bp. Pearson.

(f) St. Matt. vii. 21 to 23.

(i) 2 Tim. ii. 12.

Our LORD speaks not of *the intention* with which He came into the world; for, "on Earth Peace" was the song of the Angels on the Night of His Nativity: nay, the Apostles, ("shod with the preparation of the Gospel of Peace,") (k) were instructed, as we have just seen, to enter every house of their sojourn with a message of Peace. But the sad *result* of CHRIST's coming (owing to the corruption of Man's fallen Nature,) was to be strife and division; "a sword," as it is here declared.

The cause of such enmity in households seems glanced at in what follows:

35, 36 For I am come to set a man at variance against his Father, and the daughter against her Mother, and the Daughter-in-law against her Mother-in-law. And a man's foes shall be they of his own household.

Our SAVIOUR here quotes from one of His ancient prophets,—namely, Micah vii. 6. One of the Fathers, remarking on the circumstances, observes justly,—“We should always take note when a passage is cited out of the Old Testament; whether the sense only, or the very words are given.” In this place, the exactness of the quotation is remarkable.

37, 38 He that loveth Father or Mother more than Me is not worthy of Me: and he that loveth Son or Daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after Me, is not worthy of Me.

By such sayings, uttered long before the time of His Passion, did our SAVIOUR not obscurely intimate by what death He was Himself to die. The allusion is to the practice of compelling malefactors to bear the cross whereon they were destined to suffer.

39 He that findeth his life shall lose it; and he that loseth his life for My sake shall find it.

A few words must here be supplied; and a clause in the latter part of the verse sufficiently indicates what they are. The blessed Speaker declares that the man who by denying his Master, and refusing to bear any part of *His* heavy burden, obtains the enjoyment of this present life,—will lose his inheritance in that which is to come: whereas he who, for CHRIST's sake, disregards this present life, shall win Life Eternal. . . . Almost the self-same sayings as are contained in the two last verses, will be found to recur further on, in chap. xvi. 24, 25. See also St. John xii. 25.

Our LORD concludes with lofty promises, and words of glorious encouragement:

40 He that receiveth you receiveth Me, and he that receiveth Me receiveth Him that sent Me.

A marvellous saying, truly! It is found repeated, with slight variations, and on no less than three distinct occasions besides the present: namely, in St. Mark ix. 37; St. Luke x. 16; and St. John xiii. 20.—Surely the sayings of our LORD which are found to have been frequently on His lips, (and there are many such,) deserve to be most attentively considered!

41 He that receiveth a Prophet in the name of a Prophet shall receive a Prophet's reward: and he that receiveth a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall receive a righteous man's reward.

“In the name of a prophet,” and “of a righteous man,” denotes the absence of any other motive or consideration, save that he *is* a prophet, (that is, a divinely commissioned teacher;) *is* a righteous man.

And his “*reward*,” probably signifies a recompense not unlike that which the

(k) Ephes. vi. 15.

Preacher and the Saint will himself receive at God's hand. For it had been anciently decreed in Israel,—“As his part is that goeth down to the battle, so shall his part be that tarrieth by the stuff: they shall part alike.”(l)

42 And whosoever shall give to drink unto one of these little ones a cup of cold *water* only in the name of a Disciple, verily I say unto you, he shall in no wise lose his reward.

Our SAVIOUR repeated this saying on a different occasion,—namely, in St. Mark ix. 41; the entire context of which it will be found highly instructive to compare with the present place. He was then embracing “a little child” in His arms; but He reserves the *mention* of “little ones” for the present occasion,—as if to remind us that the weak, and the guileless, and the simple, and the pure, and the young, are *all* as “Babes”(m) in His sight.

And oh, the marvel of the promise thus twice recorded! “A cup of cold water,” in Time, to find its reward—(“a sea of pleasure,” as Bishop Andrewes speaks,)—throughout the ages of Eternity! It may be, that our merciful LORD thus mentioned the simplest offering of any, and one which is within the reach of the poorest, in order to indicate that *no one* who desires to show his love towards CHRIST need suppose himself debarred of the means of doing so.

(l) 1 Samuel xxx. 24.

(m) See St. Matt. xi. 25.

THE PRAYER.

O GOD, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding; pour into our hearts such love toward Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain Thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER XI.

2 *John sendeth his disciples to CHRIST.* 7 *CHRIST's testimony concerning John.* 18 *The opinion of the people, both concerning John and CHRIST.* 20 *CHRIST upbraideth the unthankfulness and unrepentance of Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum.* 25 *And praising His FATHER's Wisdom in revealing the Gospel to the simple,* 28 *He calleth to Him all such as feel the burden of their sins.*

1 AND it came to pass, when JESUS had made an end of commanding His Twelve Disciples, He departed thence to teach and to preach in their cities.

The former Chapter described the sending forth of the Twelve; and contained the solemn charge which their LORD and ours delivered to them on that occasion. We learn from the present verse that, after He had sent them forth, our SAVIOUR took His third great ministerial Journey through Galilee, alone; and the Reader should take notice in how exceedingly slight a manner that mighty event is here recorded.

He is further requested to believe that the allusion in the ensuing verse is *not* to "the works" which were wrought on the occasion of the Journey just noticed: but to the cure of the Centurion's Servant, and the raising of the Widow's Son. A reference to St. Luke vii. 17, 18, is almost enough to establish this fact. It may be also here suggested, that when our LORD, (in verse 5,) says,—"*the Dead are raised up;*" it is to the miracle performed on the Widow of Nain's Son that He is alluding. The messengers of John had not *seen* this, indeed, but they received an account of the transaction from those who had been eye-witnesses of it; and *that* is perhaps the reason why our LORD (in ver. 4) bids the men Go and show John again those things which they "*heard,*" as well as "*saw.*"

2, 3 Now when John had heard in the prison the works of CHRIST, he sent two of his Disciples and said unto Him, Art Thou He that should come, or do we look for another?

St. John the Baptist was at this time imprisoned in the castle of Machærus,—a fortress belonging to Herod Antipas, but on the very confines of his dominions; as will be found explained more at length in the notes on St. Mark vi. 17 to 20. The rumor of certain of our SAVIOUR's miracles, is found to have been conveyed to the Baptist's ears, by the Disciples of John.(a) Whereupon, he sends two of them to CHRIST, with the inquiry recorded in the text:—"Art Thou *He that should come?*" That is, "*Art Thou the CHRIST?*"(b) For, "*He that should come,*" or "*is to come,*" was one of the titles by which MESSIAH was designated in prophecy. See Habakkuk ii. 3, as it is quoted in Hebrews x. 37: and consider Genesis xlix. 10; Exodus iv. 13; Isaiah xxxv. 4; Ezekiel xxi. 27; Zech. ix. 9:—in the Old Testament. St. Matthew iii. 11: xxi. 9: xxiii. 39. St. John iii. 11: v. 43: vi. 14,—in the New.

But what was the motive of the Baptist in making this inquiry? Was it in consequence of any *personal* sense of doubt? Had he begun to waver in his belief? Certain it is, that he had been permitted to exercise his Ministry for the space of

(a) St. Luke vii. 18.

(b) Compare St. Luke iii. 15, 16.

only a few months; and he seems to have been blessed with but slender intercourse with his LORD. May he then,—(as some have thought,)—have become perplexed and staggered, at the end of more than a year's imprisonment? Or, are we, (with our Fathers in the Faith,) simply to behold in this transaction the expedient of the Baptist to convince his disciples that *He* to whom they ought to transfer their allegiance, had indeed appeared?

Either alternative is extremely improbable: and the first is even monstrous. That the disciples of John were incredulous with respect to our LORD's Sacred Office, cannot indeed well be doubted: but that their incredulity was shared by their Master, is an opinion which can scarcely be entertained by any one who considers such places as,—St. John i. 26 to 34: iii. 27 to 36. On the other hand, that the Baptist also desired for himself *the confirmation of his own Faith*,—the comfortable corroboration from the lips of CHRIST, of his own deep-rooted, and well-grounded convictions respecting MESSIAH,—seems an abundantly probable circumstance. This view suits the context very well; and rather derives support from the discourse which follows,—in verses 7, 8, &c. Indirectly, therefore, the Baptist may be regarded as an Ambassador in bonds; effectually discharging the purpose of his mission, even in the dungeon of Machærus; for “the Word of God is not bound.”(c)

St. Luke relates that our LORD performed many miracles of healing in reply to the inquiry of John's disciples:(d) whereupon,—

4, 5 JESUS answered and said unto them, Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see: the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the Gospel preached to them.

As if our LORD had added,—and John will be abundantly satisfied; John, whom ye are willing to believe, will be able easily to convince you, that MESSIAH must indeed be come at last: that these are the days of which it was foretold by Isaiah,—“Then the eyes of the Blind shall be opened, and the ears of the Deaf shall be unstopped. Then shall the Lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the Dumb sing.”(e) “For the Works which the FATHER hath given Me to finish, the same works that I do, bear witness of Me, that the FATHER hath sent Me.”(f)

Yet more,—the Dead are now raised; (for God's performance ever exceeds God's promise): and, as a crowning act of Love, the Mysteries of the Gospel,—unlike the Wisdom which the Jewish Doctors impart to those alone who can afford to pay largely for it,—are freely conveyed to the poorest sort of all: as was also specially foretold by Isaiah.(g)—See more in the note on St. Luke vii. 22.

Take notice how differently God deals with different applicants. The woman of Samaria asked no question, but was expressly informed by our LORD that He was the MESSIAH.(h) Here, men come from far to make the inquiry; and instead of words, they are presented with a sign. Turn to the note on St. Luke viii. 39: also on St. Mark v. 19. Refer also to what was said on St. John i. 47.

6 And blessed is *he* whosoever shall not be offended in Me.

Here, then, is another “Beatitude.”(i) The words, it has been thought, were aimed at, as well as addressed to, the two disciples of John. They mean,—Blessed is he whose Faith shall not fail him; who, (in the language of Scripture,) shall not *stumble*, at anything he beholds, or shall hereafter behold in Me: My lowly Birth and Condition, (at which our LORD's countrymen were “offended,”—see St. Matthew xiii. 57:)—My hard sayings, and lofty Teaching, (at which many of His Disciples were “offended,”—see St. John vi. 60, 61, 66:) My Cross and Passion, (at which the Twelve were “offended,”—see St. Matthew xxvi. 31.) . . . Consider by all means Isaiah viii. 14: Romans ix. 33: 1 Cor. i. 23: 1 St. Peter ii. 6 to 8.

(c) 2 Tim. ii. 9.

(d) St. Luke vii. 21.

(e) Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.—Compare also Isaiah xxix. 18: xxxii. 3, 4: xlii. 7: lxi. 1. Also Ps. cxlvi. 8.

(f) St. John v. 36.

(g) Isaiah lxi. 1,—as interpreted by St. Luke iv. 18.

(h) St. John iv. 25, 26.

(i) See St. Matthew v. 3, &c. and the note there.

The preceding inquiry seems to have been made, and answered, in the presence of a vast multitude of persons: and it would appear that the impression which it produced upon their minds was disparaging to the Baptist. Whence, it follows,—

7 And as they departed, JESUS began to say unto the multitudes concerning John, What went ye out into the Wilderness to see? A reed shaken with the wind?

As if, (perhaps,) the Divine Speaker had said:—Ye are suspecting My Fore-runner of a wavering Faith; but, by the evidence of your own actions, I will convict you of your unreasonableness. Ye went out in large numbers^(k) into the Wilderness, drawn by the fame of John's preaching, to behold the man of whom such wondrous things were related. Was it the character of one easily shaken from his steadfastness,—a nature fickle and unsteady as that of the reeds which grow in the Waste,—which drew you forth? Or, did ye go to behold one who had set his face like a flint to deliver his stern message? and who stood up, stable as a rock, while he proclaimed God's Anger against a stubborn and a sinful generation?

8 But what went ye out for to see? A man clothed in soft raiment? behold, they that wear soft *clothing* are in King's houses.

The Divine Speaker continues to bear testimony, in turn, to *him* who had once borne such fearless testimony to Himself. He is reminding the people of the days when they trooped forth in such crowds, to see and hear the Baptist. Certainly it was not a mere nothing,—a quivering reed,—which had provoked their curiosity: nor was it the report of one living luxuriously, which had drawn them forth. But it was the fame of a great Prophet, who professed to have been sent by the living God: and to be preparing His way before Him. It may also be that, with our Lord's present auditory, the Baptist's protracted imprisonment constituted another ground of offence, and suspicion. "The hardships of a dungeon, (the multitude may have thought,) have crushed his spirit, and occasioned this timid inquiry. And if *John* can speak thus, in *whom* may not doubts be excusable?" But our Lord reminds them what manner of man the Baptist had shown himself. Was it a person of luxurious life whom they had gone out into the Wilderness to see? Or was it one of austere manners? clad in a garment of skin; who fed on insects, and on honey out of the stony rock? whose dwelling was the Waste; and who had been nursed in Solitude,—amid hardships, sufferings, and privations?

Then,—as if to meet the suspicion that the Baptist may, after all, have borne a fallacious testimony concerning Christ, his Divine Apologist proceeds,—

9 But what went ye out for to see? A Prophet? yea, I say unto you, and more than a Prophet.

"More than a Prophet;" first,—because he was himself the subject of Prophecy: secondly,—because, whereas other Prophets had merely *foretold* the coming of Christ, St. John Baptist was His actual *precursor*: "the Prophet of the Highest," as it is said in St. Luke i. 76: going before Him, not only in thought, and in word; but in person, and in deed: pointing Him out, not only with His lips, but even with his finger. Consider St. Luke i. 76. As it follows,—

10 For this is *he*, of whom it is written, Behold, I send My Messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.

Which words are a quotation from Malachi iii. 1: but *there*, it is said,—"*My* Messenger . . . shall prepare the way before *Me*." CHRIST, by whose Spirit all Prophecy was spoken,^(l) taking back these words of His latest Prophet into His lips, and uttering them afresh, is found here, and wherever else they recur,^(m) to deliver them otherwise: namely, thus,—"*My* Messenger . . . before *Thy* Face, . . . shall prepare *Thy* way before *Thee*." Such quotations are nothing less than *inter-*

(k) St. Matthew iii. 5, 6: and St. Luke iii. 7.

(l) 1 St. Peter i. 2.

(m) Namely, in St. Mark i. 2 and St. Luke vii. 27. Compare St. Luke i. 76.

pretations of Scripture. The present one not only declares CHRIST to be God; but reveals the Divine *Unity*.

"Having first delivered the Prophet's testimony in praise of John," (says an ancient Archbishop,) "He rested not there, but added His own decision respecting him:" setting him above all the Saints of the Old Testament, when He said,—

11 Verily I say unto you, Among them that are born of women there hath not risen a greater than John the Baptist:

On which, one of the Ancients remarks,—“I suppose that all the Saints, tried by the keenness of the Divine judgment, rank in a fixed order; some lower, some before other. Whence we understand that he who hath none greater than himself, is greatest of all.” Take notice that the “greatness” of John had been already the subject of Angelic comment; as St. Luke relates.⁽ⁿ⁾ Our LORD, having thus brought His praise of the Baptist to a climax, proceeds to establish more clearly the Dignity of the Christian Dispensation: the surpassing Blessedness of that Gospel which He Himself came to deliver; and for which, the preaching of John only prepared the way.

notwithstanding, he that is least in the Kingdom of Heaven is greater than he.

A marvellous saying truly, and one which may be easily misunderstood; yet one which it is not difficult to understand aright. John was doubtless incomparably superior in holiness to any among ourselves, who are actual inheritors of that Kingdom of which CHRIST here speaks. But what our LORD implies, is, that whatever Holiness attached to His great Forerunner, as well as to the other Saints of the elder Covenant, was derived to them not from *the Law*, (under which they lived,) but from *the Gospel*, which as yet was not. For, “not having received the promises, but having [only] seen them afar off,”^(o) their Blessedness arose out of their participation, by Faith, in that Kingdom concerning which our LORD declares such glorious things: and since it was the “the Kingdom of Heaven,” darting forward a ray of its own future glory, which made those elders supremely great,—it is manifest that every little one who, by Baptism into CHRIST's Death, is made a “member of CHRIST, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven,”—is in a true sense “greater than he” who, naturally an alien, becomes, only by special grace and favour, a partaker in the Blessedness to come.

12 And from the days of John the Baptist until now, the Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.

The Apostles were sent “rather to the lost sheep of the House of Israel:”^(p) but it was the Publicans and Sinners^(q) who profited by their preaching. The Kingdom of Heaven, therefore, when these last “pressed into it,”^(r) is said to have “suffered violence,” and to have been “taken by force;” for the birth-right and the blessing of Israel, forfeited by them, was snatched away and firmly held, by the Gentiles. This had been typically foreshown by Jacob when he supplanted Esau:^(s) and indeed, throughout the Old Testament, the minds of faithful men had been prepared for such an issue, by the preference generally enjoyed by *the younger son*. See the third note on St. Luke xv. 32.

This verse and the next will be found in quite a different connection in St. Luke's Gospel,—chap. xvi. 16.

13 For all the Prophets and the Law prophesied until John.

The Baptist was the connecting link between the Law and the Gospel; as will be found explained in the note on St. John i. 28. With *him*, was “*The beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST*,”—as St. Mark declares:^(t) and St. Peter implies no less, in the first chapter of the Acts,—ver. 22. See the note on St. Luke i. 22.

(n) St. Luke i. 15

(q) See St. Luke vii. 39

(t) St. Mark i. 1.

(o) Hebrews xi. 13.

(r) St. Luke xvi. 16.

(p) St. Matthew x. 6.

(s) Genesis xxvii. 36.

14 And if ye will receive *it*, this is Elias, which was for to come.

"*If ye will receive it*:"—for God constrains not the Will,^(u) but leaves men free to act as they choose; John Baptist therefore was the "*Elijah*," promised by the prophet Malachi at the very end of the Canon of the Old Testament;^(x) and this our Lord repeated on another occasion,—viz. in St. Matthew xvii. 10 to 13. Not *Elijah himself*,—which the carnal minded Jews supposed possible; as appears from the inquiry recorded in St. John i. 21,^(y)—where see the note: but one who came "*in the Spirit and Power of Elias*."^(a) Hence, it follows,—

15 He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

Concerning which words, see the note on St. Mark iv. 9. The Reader should also here refer to the 29th and 30th verses of 7th chapter of St. Luke's Gospel,—where the effect which our Lord's words produced on His auditory, is noticed.

16 But whereunto shall I liken this generation?

With such a phrase, the same Divine Speaker prefaced His Parable of the Grain of Mustard Seed;^(b) and of the Leaven.^(c) He proceeds to derive His illustration from the sports of Children: but *what particular sport* is not exactly known. An ancient Eastern Bishop relates that "a company of boys used to assemble in the market place; and, mocking the sudden changes in the affairs of this life, some of them sang,—some mourned. But the mourners did not rejoice with those that rejoiced; nor did those who rejoiced attend to those who wept. They then rebuked each other, in turn, for their want of sympathy." Doubtless it must have been something of this kind which is here alluded to, by our SAVIOUR.

17 It is like unto children sitting in the markets, and calling unto their fellows, and saying, We have piped unto you, and ye have not danced; we have mourned unto you, and ye have not lamented.

"As concerning the flesh,"^(d) our SAVIOUR CHRIST, as well as the Baptist, were of the same stock as the rest of the Jewish nation. As with children, therefore, in the market place, complaining that their music had not made "their fellows" dance, neither had their lamentation made "their fellows" mourn; so had it fared, (says our Lord,) with Himself and His Forerunner. I have set before you the pattern of social virtue,—the graces of a most perfect Charity,—and ye have scorned My teaching: John has practised a hard life,—has fasted and displayed the graces of the largest self-denial,—and ye have blasphemed against him. As it follows,—

18, 19 For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, He hath a devil. The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, Behold a man gluttonous, and a wine-bibber, a friend of publicans and sinners. But Wisdom is justified of Her Children.

In these words, our Lord draws the picture of a perverse nation; who, neither by austerities, nor by indulgence, were to be won over. CHRIST'S Forerunner had pleaded with them in vain: CHRIST Himself had been equally unsuccessful.

But, take note, (for it throws light on a difficult passage,) that in St. Luke's Gospel it is here added,—"*And all the people that heard Him, and the publicans justified GOD, being baptized with the Baptism of John*."^(e) Accordingly it seems to be implied, with reference to those more faithful ones, that notwithstanding the perversity of the wicked, yet was there a remnant left: and that, by her own true children, the ways of Wisdom were abundantly justified. The same Righteousness was taught by John Baptist, and by the Son of Man, though it was to be attained

(u) See the third note on St. Matthew iv. 18.

(y) With which compare St. Matthew xvi. 14.

(b) St. Mark iv. 30; and St. Luke xiii. 18.

(d) Romans ix. 5.

(x) Malachi iv. 5, 6.

(a) St. Luke i. 17.

(c) St. Luke xiii. 20.

(e) St. Luke vii. 29.

by different paths. The Disciples of either were therefore the children of *One*; and by those, His children, CHRIST would be abundantly justified in all His dealings with mankind: confessed to be a God of surpassing Goodness, of wondrous Patience, of most perfect Love.

The awful censure, which has hitherto been general, now becomes particular. Our LORD specifies certain towns which were especially guilty:

20, 21 Then began He to upbraid the cities wherein most of His mighty works were done, because they repented not: Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes.

Truly, a most striking statement, on two accounts. First, because it informs us that "most of His mighty works" were done in two cities,—one of which, (Chorazin,) is nowhere else even *named* in the Gospels: while no single miracle is related as having been performed in either City.(*f*) And how does this suggest the immensity and the number of the operations of His hands,—concerning which St. John said that "if they should be written every one," he supposed "that even the World itself could not contain the books that should be written!"(*g*)

And next,—these words of our LORD are remarkable as revealing the extent of the Divine Omniscience. God knows not only what *will be*; but (which seems stranger,) what *would have been*. If Tyre and Sidon had seen the miracles which the streets of Chorazin and Bethsaida had witnessed, the inhabitants of those two famous cities *would have repented*. . . . The same knowledge is declared in 1 Samuel xxiii. 11 and 12; where God tells David that the men of Keilah will deliver him into the hand of Saul, if he remains within the city. And the like is observable in other places.

Lastly, be it observed that St. Peter, St. Andrew, and St. Philip,—were all of Bethsaida. There are great saints therefore in the very worst cities. Even filthy Sodom harbors "just Lot."

22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the Day of Judgment, than for you.

Such words remind us that sinners are but *reserved* for punishment: that although, *to us*, Tyre and Sidon seem gone by, and the Old World has become but a History,—to the ALMIGHTY, it is all far otherwise. With Him, Tyre and Sidon are a living reality,—a breathing multitude; which simply *waits* for the Day of Judgment to receive its final doom!

23, 24 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto Heaven, shalt be brought down to Hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, that it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the Day of Judgment, than for thee.

Some of the remarks already offered on verses 21 and 22, here suggest themselves afresh.

Capernaum,—“exalted unto Heaven,” (that is, raised to the very highest pitch of greatness,)(*h*) by the habitual presence, by the frequent discourses, and by the mighty miracles of the LORD of Heaven and Earth,—was to experience a tremendous fall: and the denunciation has taken strict effect; since the name of the City has long since perished, and its very site is only conjecturally known. Travellers describe the spot on which Capernaum must have stood, as a tract of marshy ground close to the Lake; overgrown with shrubs, and overspread with masses of

(*f*) This Bethsaida is to be distinguished from that other Bethsaida, *East* of the Lake, near which the five thousand were fed,—St. Luke ix. 10; and where the blind man was restored to sight,—St. Mark viii. 22.

(*g*) St. John xxi. 25.

(*h*) Compare the expression with St. Luke x. 18.

stone and marble,—the foundations and sub-structures of the ancient edifices. “The utter desolation of the place,” (writes a friend, already quoted,) (i) “is most striking. Plants of a wild thorny nature, mingled with oleander, and other kinds, form a covering to the shore, quite down to the water’s edge; so thick and tangled that it is with great difficulty you can make your way through it. Almost hidden by this rank vegetation, lie broken columns, large hewn stones of costly workmanship, beautiful capitals, &c. in the greatest confusion, and in almost incredible numbers. Large snakes and venomous reptiles abound among the brush-wood; and add not a little to the desolate and ruined character of the place.”

Chorazin, Bethsaida and Capernaum have all three entirely disappeared. There can be no doubt, however, that they stood about two miles distant one from the other, on the Western side of the Lake, towards its Northern extremity. The terms in which their future destiny is mentioned clearly prove that there are different degrees of misery in Hell.

In connection with the last note, above, on verse 21, the reader is requested to refer to some remarks which are strictly applicable to the present place, in the concluding note on St. Matthew viii. 10.—He will also discover from St. Luke’s Gospel,—x. 12 to 15,—that our Blessed Lord delivered almost the self-same words as those contained in the last five verses, (verses 20 to 24,) on quite a distinct occasion.

25 At that time JESUS answered and said, I thank Thee, O FATHER, LORD of Heaven and Earth, because Thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto Babes.

Our LORD says not,—“And hast revealed them unto *the foolish*,” but, “Unto *Babes*,” which must evidently mean,—the humble and meek; persons of childlike dispositions. And this proves that by “wise and prudent,” He only means men “*wise in their own conceits*,”—as St. Paul expresses it: (k) condemns—not, Wisdom and Understanding, but—Pride. “Woe unto them,” (says the prophet Isaiah,) “who are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight.” (l)

Our LORD here “thanks” the FATHER,—that is, “praises,” and “adores” Him; “gives Him glory,”—not for having *hid* the saving Doctrines of the Gospel from “the wise . . . the Scribe . . . the Disputer of this World;” (m) but for having *revealed* those blessed Truths to the lowly and meek; His “little ones,” as He elsewhere calls them. Compare the form of expression of Romans vi. 17.

Our Blessed Lord’s sayings in the present and next two verses, will be found to recur in quite a different connection in St. Luke’s Gospel,—x. 21, 22.

26 Even so, FATHER: for so it seemed good in Thy sight.

Whereby we learn that it is in conformity with God’s Eternal decree, that the meek are exalted; and the proud in the imaginations of their hearts, scattered: “the hungry” “filled with good things;” (n) and “the rich” “sent empty away.” And Holy Scripture is full of this, from one end to the other. “Surely, He scorneth the scornors; but He giveth grace unto the lowly,” (o)—says the wise King; and his words are repeated both by St. James, (p) and by St. Peter. (q) This doctrine is the very key-note of the *Magnificat*, or Song of the Blessed Virgin Mary. “For Judgment I am come into this World,” said our Blessed Lord; “that they which see not might see; and that they which see might be made blind.” Consider Romans i. 21, 22. 1 Cor. i. 18 to 31.

27 All things are delivered unto Me of My FATHER: and no man knoweth the SON, but the FATHER; neither knoweth any man the FATHER, save the SON, and *he* to whomsoever the SON will reveal *Him*.

By the mutual knowledge, proclaiming that the FATHER and the SON are of one substance.

(i) See the notes on St. Luke vii. 11, and St. John ii. 1.

(k) Romans xi. 25; xii. 16. (l) Isaiah v. 21.

(m) Compare St. Matth. vii. 11, with St. Luke xi. 13.

(n) Proverbs iii. 34. (p) St. James iv. 6.

(q) 1 Cor. i. 20.

(r) 1 St. Peter v. 5.

It is the Divine office of the SON to reveal the FATHER. The FATHER declares Himself by His WORD. See the notes on St. John i. 1.—And not only “no man” knoweth the FATHER; but *no being whatever*. The only access to the FATHER is through the SON.

“To whomsoever the SON will reveal Him,”—should rather be,—“May determine to reveal Him: for express mention is made of the counsel of His Will.”(r)

Hear, next, what comfortable words our SAVIOUR CHRIST saith unto all that truly turn to Him.

28 Come unto Me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Compare, by all means, the similar invitation in St. John vii. 37: “If any man thirst, let him come unto Me, and drink.” “He that cometh to Me, shall never hunger; and he that believeth in Me shall never thirst.”(s) To “come” to CHRIST, is to believe in Him: to “draw near with Faith.” And the present invitation is universal; for the Flesh itself is a burden,—as the Church admits in her Burial service; and as many of us as “are in this Tabernacle do groan,—being burdened.”(t) Consider, further, whether those “heavy burdens and grievous to be borne,”(u) which the Scribes and Pharisees bound, and laid on the shoulders of our SAVIOUR’s auditory, may not have been also alluded to. For take notice that in ver. 30 the Blessed Speaker Himself proposes a “burden;” with the gracious intimation, however, that it shall be “light.”

And yet the persons chiefly addressed,—those who “labour” most, and are most “heavy laden,”—are doubtless such as have been in bondage to the Devil, and are servants of Sin: such as are “grieved and wearied with the burden of their sins:”(x) such as feel them to be a burden,—as it is said in the heading of the present Chapter. In support of which view, see the concluding note.

29 Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls.

In which words we have an allusion to Zechariah ix. 9, and a quotation from Jeremiah vi. 16. Would it not seem as if our LORD loved to re-syllable the words of His ancient Prophets?

Learn of Me,—“not, to create a World, or to do Miracles in that World: but,—Learn meekness and holiness of heart.” So writes a famous Bishop of the West: and he proceeds,—“Wouldest thou build up a mighty fabric of greatness? Lay first the foundation of Humility: for the loftier the structure any one seeks to raise, the deeper must he dig for his foundation.”

“Take My yoke upon you:” that is, Believe My Doctrine, Submit to My Discipline. “This yoke is twofold,—a yoke of Instruction, and a yoke of Affliction. And CHRIST calls it His yoke; because He, as a Lord, lays it upon our necks; and, as a Servant, bore it upon His own neck first, before He laid it upon ours. Observe, further, that the way and manner how to bear CHRIST’s yoke must be learned of CHRIST Himself.” Take notice how persuasively He recommends it:—

30 For My yoke is easy, and My burden is light.

The word here translated “easy,” rather signifies “sweet,”—“pleasant,”—“gracious,”—“profitable,” or the like: and the meaning of the Blessed Speaker seems to be that He invites men to no morose or melancholy course: but that His statutes will be found to be “sweeter than honey, and the honey-comb:”(y) His testimonies, the very “rejoicing of the heart:”(z) that in His presence is “fullness of joy; at His right hand, pleasures for evermore.”(a) For “His commandments are not grievous,” as St. John declares.(b) This announcement therefore agrees with that which is found in another place: namely, that WISDOM’s “ways” (that is, CHRIST’s ways,) “are ways of Pleasantness, and all her paths are

(r) Ephes. i. 11.

(s) St. John vi. 35.

(t) 2 Cor. v. 4.

(u) St. Matthew xxiii. 4. Compare Acts xv. 28.

(x) Communion Service. Compare Ps. xxxviii. 4.

(y) Psalm xix. 10.

(z) Ps. cxix. 111.

(a) Ps. xvi. 11.

(b) 1 St. John v. 3.

Peace.”(c) . . . Not every one, it may be thought, is aware of the extent to which *Joy*, as one of the graces of the Christian Life, is recommended in Scripture.(d) And can there be any doubt that ample provision has been made for it, likewise?

What effect then did this gracious invitation produce upon those who heard? From the course of the narrative in the present Gospel, you cannot tell; but by a reference to St. Luke's account—(vii. 24 to 35,)—of the preceding discourse, it will be discovered that, at the end of it, a Woman of the City, which was a sinner,—one, therefore, who “laboured and was heavy laden,”—moved by the loving promise of a sweet yoke, and a light burden, and withal rest unto her soul,—followed our LORD into the House of the Pharisee where He went to eat bread; there washed His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Wherefore her sins, which were many, were forgiven!

(c) Prov. iii. 17. Compare Wisdom viii. 1.

(d) See the following places:—St. Matth. xiii. 20, 44. St. John xv. 11: xvi. 20, 22, 24. Romans v. 2: xii. 12: xiv. 17: xv. 13. 2 Cor. vi. 10. Galat. v. 22. Philipp. i. 25: iii. 1: iv. 4. 1 Thess. i. 6: v. 16. 1 St. Peter i. 6, 8.

THE PRAYER.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, merciful LORD, to Thy faithful people pardon and peace; that they may be cleansed from all their sins, and serve Thee with a quiet mind: through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER XII.

1 CHRIST reproveth the blindness of the Pharisees concerning the breach of the Sabbath, 3 by Scriptures, 9 by Reason, 13 and by a Miracle. 22 He healeth the man possessed, that was blind and dumb. 31 Blasphemy against the HOLY GHOST shall never be forgiven. 36 Account shall be made of idle words. 38 He rebuketh the unfaithful, who seek after a sign. 49 And sheweth who is His brother, sister, and mother.

1, 2, 3, 4 AT that time JESUS went on the Sabbath day through the corn; and His disciples were an hungred, and began to pluck the ears of corn, and to eat. But when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto Him, Behold, Thy disciples do that which is not lawful to do upon the Sabbath day. But He said unto them, Have ye not read what David did, when he was an hungred, and they that were with him; how he entered into the House of God, and did eat the show-bread, which was not lawful for him to eat, neither for them which were with him, but only for the Priests?

It is admirably said in the heading of the present Chapter,—“CHRIST reproveth the blindness of the Pharisees concerning the breach of the Sabbath, by Scriptures,—by Reason,—and by a Miracle.” One of the Scriptures cited by Him,—(1 Samuel xxi. 1 to 6,)—has been already sufficiently commented on, in the notes to St. Mark ii. 23 to 26,—which see. The Blessed Speaker is found to have added a further reference to Scripture on this occasion.

5 Or have ye not read in the Law, how that on the Sabbath days the Priests in the Temple profane the Sabbath, and are blameless?

That is,—Break the letter of the Commandment which declares that *no manner of work* shall be done on the Sabbath: for the Law required, “on the Sabbath day, two lambs” for a burnt-offering; “beside the continual burnt-offering, and his drink-offering.” (a)

The Pharisees may have been disposed to reply that the Temple sanctified *that* labour, but that *here* there was *no* Temple: wherefore our LORD proceeds,

6 But I say unto you, that in this place is One greater than the Temple.

“Greater,”—inasmuch as it was “*His* Temple;” (b) a House made glorious, yea, and made holy too, by *His* presence,—who was the true *Shekinah*, (or Glory,) foretold by the Prophet Haggai. (c) The reader is referred to the notes on the words “dwelt among us,” in St. John i. 14.

7 But if ye had known what *this* meaneth, I will have Mercy, and not Sacrifice, ye would not have condemned the guiltless.

(a) Numbers xxviii. 9, 10.

(b) See Malachi iii. 1.

(c) See Haggai ii. 7 and 9.

Thus, for the second time, our SAVIOUR quotes Hosea vi. 6. See St. Matthew ix. 13, and the note there. The Reader will perceive, from the allusion to the "Priests in the Temple," in ver. 5, that our LORD's argument is,—If then *those* My Servants, who serve *My Temple* only, go unblamed, although their acts are of a purely ceremonial kind,—shall blame attach to *these* My Servants who wait on *Me*, for the performance of an act of Mercy,—involving the very support of human life? My Disciples are "guiltless," that is, "free from blame," (says our LORD).—

8 For the Son of Man is LORD even of the Sabbath day.

It was *He* who had originally "blessed the Seventh Day, and hallowed it," and commanded men to observe it. *He* therefore had power, and *He only*, to dispense with its observance. See the note on St. Mark ii. 8.

The incident which follows, happened on "another Sabbath,"—St. Luke vi. 6.

9, 10 And when *He* was departed thence, *He* went into their synagogue: and, behold, there was a man which had *his* hand withered. And they asked *Him*, saying, Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath days? that they might accuse *Him*.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark iii. 1 and 2.

11 And *He* said unto them, What man shall there be among you, that shall have one sheep, and if it fall into a pit on the Sabbath day, will he not lay hold on it, and lift *it* out?

The self-same striking reasoning is found to recur in St. Luke, xiv. 5,—when our Blessed LORD was about to heal "a certain man which had the dropsy." Close akin to it, is what we meet with in St. Luke xiii. 15. Consider also the reasoning in St. John vii. 22, 23,—which is quite similar.

12 How much then is a man better than a sheep!

He does not allude, as *He* might have done, to their real motive. *He* knew that it was not from humanity to the sheep, but from regard to their own interests, that they performed the act described in verse 11. But, as the Author of Creation, *He* sets the value of one of *His* creatures against the other; and the argument is complete. *He* contrasts a sheep with a man: and leaves *them* to contrast the work of Covetousness with the work of Love. Compare St. Matthew vi. 26.

Wherefore it is lawful to do well on the Sabbath days.

Our LORD Himself answers the question *He* had Himself already asked: see St. Mark iii. 4.

"Thus, in the everlasting rest," says an ancient, beautifully,—"*we* shall rest only from evil, and not from good."

13 Then saith *He* to the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched *it* forth; and it was restored whole, like as the other.

14, 15, 16 Then the Pharisees went out, and held a counsel against *Him*, how they might destroy *Him*. But when JESUS knew *it*, *He* withdrew Himself from thence:

The Reader is referred to St. Mark iii. 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7; and to the notes which he will find upon these words in that place.

and great multitudes followed *Him*, and *He* healed them all;

"*Him* whom the Pharisees with one consent plotted against to destroy, the untaught multitude with one consent love and follow. Whence they received the fulfilment of their desires."

and charged them that they should not make Him known.

See the first note on St. Matthew viii. 4, and the notes on St. Mark i. 44, 45. The Evangelist proceeds to quote from Isaiah xlii. 1 to 4.

17, 18 That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by Esaias the Prophet, saying, Behold My servant, whom I have chosen;

For CHRIST "took upon Him the form of a *Servant*,"(d)—seeing that He, being God, assumed our Human Nature. Among His Disciples, moreover, He was "as he that *serveth*,"(e) It is only in respect of His Incarnation, that our LORD JESUS CHRIST is called the Servant of ALMIGHTY GOD.

My Beloved, in whom My soul is well pleased:

The very words of St. Matthew iii. 17, and xvii. 5.

I will put My Spirit upon Him;

Consider St. Luke i. 35: iii. 22: iv. 18,—quoting Isaiah lxi. 1.

and He shall show judgment to the Gentiles.

That is,—He shall out of the Law bring forth, and display before all nations, the pure Doctrines of the Gospel.

19 He shall not strive, nor cry; neither shall any man hear His voice in the streets.

"For such was the carefulness of the Prophets," says one of the ancients, "that they had not omitted even this; but had noted all His ways and movements." Consider the instances of this which our LORD has just given, verses 14 to 16: and which seems to have suggested the quotation from Isaiah. See the note on St. Mark iii. 7. Consider also such places as the following: St. John i. 39: ii. 9: iii. 2, &c.: iv. 6, 7, &c.: v. 6 to 8, 12, 13, 14, &c.: vi. 15: vii. 10, 11: viii. 2 and 59: ix. 6, 7, 12: x. 23, 24, 39, &c., &c.

20 A bruised reed shall He not break, and smoking flax shall He not quench,

In the words of an excellent living writer, this may mean,—“He shall move so gently, that His tread shall not break a bruised reed; nor extinguish the glimmering spark in the smoking flax.”—“He that holds not out his hand to a sinner, nor bears his brother's burthen,” remarks an ancient, “breaks a bruised reed; and he who despises a weak spark of Faith in a little one, quenches smoking flax.”—Consider the following places,—St. Mark xvi. 7 and 9. St. Luke vii. 48. St. John iv. 26: viii. 11.

It is implied hereby, that He who is “Mighty to save”(f) *could* have broken the Jewish nation, as a man breaks “a bruised reed;” *could* have quenched the spark of Faith, had He willed it; but He spared the smoking flax, in His Love and Mercy.

till He send forth judgment unto victory.

21 And in His Name shall the Gentiles trust.

“Till,” (in the words of the writer last quoted,) “by this mild and quiet course, He makes the just and holy cause of the Gospel to triumph in the World.” Consider Isaiah ii. 10. St. Matthew xxviii. 19. St. Luke xxiv. 47. The Evangelist

(d) Phil. ii. 7.

(e) St. Luke xxii. 27: with which compare St. Matthew xx. 23, and St. John xiii. 14.

(f) Isaiah lxiii. 1.

has been quoting from Isaiah xlii. 1 to 4. The Hebrew of this last verse reads, "And the isles shall wait for His Law."

22 Then was brought unto Him one possessed with a devil, blind, and dumb: and He healed him, insomuch that the blind and dumb both spake and saw.

"*Spake and saw:*" not "*saw and spake.*" That is, because the thing which made the people wonder most was, that "when the devil was gone out, *the dumb spake:*" as it is said in St. Luke xi. 14.

23 And all the people were amazed, and said, Is not this the Son of David?

That is,—the promised MESSIAH; of whom it had been specially foretold by the Prophet, that He should restore sight to the blind, and speech to the dumb. In His days, said Isaiah, "the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the tongue of the dumb shall sing."(*g*) See the note on St. Matthew ix. 27.

24 But when the Pharisees heard *it*, they said, This *fellow* doth not cast out devils, but by Beelzebub the Prince of the devils.

Concerning "Beelzebub," see the note on St. Matthew x. 25. These men mean,—"*His power over the demons is obtained by a compact with the Prince of Darkness.*" Already have we heard this blasphemous charge brought against Him: (*h*) by which His enemies admitted *the reality* of what they saw. More will be found on this subject in the notes on St. Mark iii. 22,—to which the Reader is referred.

The words in the text must have been now said privately however, or it was only the secret thought of their heart; for the Evangelist proceeds:

25, 26 And JESUS knew their thoughts, and said unto them, Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation; and every City or House divided against itself shall not stand: and if Satan cast out Satan, he is divided against himself; how shall then his Kingdom stand?

It will be perceived that our LORD meets the blasphemy of His enemies by two arguments. One precedes, and is the plain statement of a most important principle: which convicted them of having advanced an unreasonable accusation. See the note on St. Mark iii. 26. Then follows another argument, which is of a personal kind,—verses 27 and 28. In the last place,—verse 29,—our LORD establishes the very contrary of what His enemies had advanced; for whereas they said that He must be in league with Satan, our SAVIOUR proves that He must needs, on the contrary, have vanquished him, before He could perform these miracles.

27 And if I by Beelzebub cast out devils, by whom do your children cast *them* out? therefore they shall be your judges.

To quote the words of a great living writer,—"*He appeals also to those sprung from themselves, who, by the use of well-known forms of exorcism, in the name of the God of Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, succeeded, (through the power of God exerted for His ancient servant's sake,) in the expulsion of evil spirits from the bodies of men: and He declares that these should be witnesses against them in the Judgment, if they dared impiously to ascribe to the Prince of Darkness wonders effected with more signal success by the immediate command of CHRIST.*" Compare St. Matt. vii. 22. St. Luke ix. 49, and Acts xix. 13, 14.

Having silenced the Pharisees, by this personal argument, our SAVIOUR presents them with the solemn alternative.

(*g*) Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

(*h*) See chap. ix. 34.

28 But if I cast out devils by the SPIRIT of GOD, then the Kingdom of GOD is come unto you.

"The fact of demons being thus expelled, was a sufficient proof that the promised MESSIAH was come: the Kingdom of Him whom the SPIRIT of GOD was to anoint for these precise works of healing deliverance, and for proclaiming the acceptable year of the LORD to Israel." (i)

The argument therefore takes the form of a *dilemma*. "If I, in order to cast out Satan, am in league with Satan,—then must you allow that your children are so likewise; but if I by the SPIRIT of GOD work these wonders,—then you must admit that the Kingdom of Heaven has overtaken you,"—"come before you were aware."

Compare the last words of verse 28, with St. Luke xi. 20,—and see the note there.

29 Or else,

This word only calls attention, gives earnestness, to a question that is asked. It recurs in chap. vii. 9: xx. 15; and may be Englished,—“Pray,”—“Come,”—or “Consider.”

how can one enter into a Strong Man's house, and spoil his goods, except he first bind the Strong Man? and then he will spoil his house.

The *Strong Man* has indeed been bound by One stronger than he; that is, his power to harm our race has been broken. “Yet ought we not therefore to be careless,” said an ancient; “for here, the Conqueror Himself pronounces him to be *strong*.”

The Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark iii. 27, and all the references there.

30 He that is not with Me is against Me; and He that gathereth not with Me scattereth abroad.

The connection of this verse with what precedes, requires supplying; but it is always a perilous matter to supply what He who “spake as never man spake,” has left unrecorded. It is humbly suggested however, that it is as if our LORD had said:—I have shown you that because I am, (as my actions prove,) *against* Satan, I cannot be connected *with* him: *he* also, because He is not with Me, is *against* Me. So likewise are all who partake his spirit. Whosoever is not with Me is against Me: nay, to My spiritual harvest, if any one contributes not his labour, he doth but scatter to the winds. Whosoever expects to reap a harvest of divine benefit, otherwise than through faith in Me, will find his hopes and his labour vain. It is only by acting “with Me,” that any amount of victory against the strong man I speak of, has ever been obtained, or can hereafter be hoped for.

Our SAVIOUR proceeds to remark on the guilt which may be incurred by such a charge as His enemies had just now brought against Himself. The mention of “the SPIRIT” (in verse 31) seems to have reference to what was said in verse 28.

31, 32 Wherefore I say unto you, All manner of sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy *against* the HOLY GHOST shall not be forgiven unto men. And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man, it shall be forgiven him: but whosoever speaketh against the HOLY GHOST, it shall not be forgiven him, neither in this world, neither in the *world* to come.

It is not of course meant that THE SON is *less* than the HOLY GHOST. (God forbid!) But as “made flesh,”—as the *Son of Man*,—as one of us, He might be rejected; and yet the sin incurred might be not unpardonable.

(i) Isaiah lxi. 1, 2, quoted in St. Luke iv. 18.

The very solemn statement which follows, and is twice repeated, was not written that weak believers should perplex and torture themselves with it; neither is it one which *any* may presume to overlook. If Impenitence *persevered in to the end* is common, then may it be feared that the sin against the HOLY GHOST is not uncommon either. The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark iii. 28, 29, and 30,—where a few remarks will be found on this mysterious subject.

33 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by *his* fruit.

It is often difficult to trace the exact connection of one verse with another; because a large portion of our Lord's Discourse is often omitted. Compare for instance St. Luke xi. 23 and 24, with St. Matthew xii. 30, 43,—where observe, seven verses are supplied by one Evangelist which are omitted by the other.

Our SAVIOUR is thought here to refer to what went before. He perhaps bids His enemies either admit that He is God, since they see that His acts are so good and gracious:—or else, if they will call *Him* Beelzebub, let them declare His actions to be devilish likewise; for the tree is known by his fruit:—"God cannot do evil works, nor the Devil good works."

But from what follows (in verses 34, 35,)—and from a comparison of such places as St. Matthew vii. 16 to 18, and St. Luke vi. 43 to 45,—it seems rather to be a warning, similar to that of the Prophet,—“O Jerusalem, wash *thine heart* from wickedness . . . How long shall Thy vain thoughts lodge within thee?”^(k) “*The man* must be changed first, that his works may be changed: for if he remains in that wherein he is evil, he cannot have good works. If he remains in that wherein he is good, he cannot have evil works.” The human *heart* (mentioned in verse 35) seems to be the “tree” here spoken of; and the “fruit” is *the fruit of the lips*.^(l) Consider St. James iii. 10, 11, 12; and observe that the *tongue* is clearly referred to above, by the language of verse 32; and below, in verses 34, 36, 37.

When, from the individual bearing of these words, we proceed to inquire into their *national* application, we are reminded of the many places of the Old and New Testament where the Jewish nation, or rather the Jewish Church, is spoken of under the figure of *a Tree*: as in Ps. lxxx. 8, &c. (with which compare St. John xv. 1 to 8.) Isaiah v. 1 to 7. St. Matthew xxi. 33, 34. St. Mark xi. 12 to 14. St. Luke xiii. 6 to 9. Especially are we reminded of St. Luke iii. 7, 8; a place which the Reader will probably think conclusive as to the meaning of the present passage.

34 O generation of vipers,

“Offspring of vipers,”—as St. John Baptist had also styled them, see St. Luke iii. 7; and the first note on the latter half of St. Luke iii. 8. The best commentary on this appellation is contained in St. Matthew xxiii.: where, in verses 30, 31, 32, our Lord reminds them of the actions of their Fathers: couples the children with the Parents; and ends with the most withering rebuke, in ver. 33.

Take notice that it was their favourite boast of being *Abraham's seed*,^(m) which gives such amazing point to these denunciations of our Lord and of His Fore-runner.⁽ⁿ⁾ Observe also that it is thereby implied that they were of “their Father, *the Devil*,”—“that Old *Serpent*.”^(o) Read, by all means, St. John viii. from verse 33 to verse 44.

35 how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh. A good man out of the good treasure of the heart bringeth forth good things: and an evil man out of the evil treasure bringeth forth evil things.

This recurs in St. Luke vi. 45, where see the note.

(k) Jeremiah iv. 14. (l) Heb. xiii. 15. (m) St. Matt. iii. 9. St. John viii. 33, 39.

(n) St. Matthew iii. 7: xxiii. 33. St. Luke iii. 7.

(o) Rev. xii. 9: xx. 2; in connection with which, consider St. Mark xvi. 18, and St. Luke x. 19.

36, 37 But I say unto you that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment. For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.

A most solemn warning, truly. We are reminded of the prominent place given to the sins of that "little member," (the tongue), in St. James' Epistle. "If any man offend not *in word*," he says, "the same is a perfect man!" (p) Consider St. James i. 26: iii. 2 to 12: also Psalm xxxiv. 12, 13, (quoted in 1 St. Peter iii. 10): xvii. 3: xxxix. 1: cxli. 3, &c. The most thoughtful and profound of English Bishops made his *first* sermon—"On the Government of *the Tongue*."

The argument in the former verse is,—Not only for the "evil things" which they utter, (that is, their blasphemous words,) shall men hereafter be called to judgment; but even of their *inconsiderate* and *unreal* words, shall they have to give account. "Idle," (literally "object-less," "useless,") seems to mean something *more* than "unprofitable," and *less* than "mischievous."

38 Then certain of the Scribes and Pharisees answered, saying, Master, we would see a sign from Thee.

What they asked for, was, "a sign *from Heaven*." See St. Luke xi. 16, and the note there. Such signs Moses, (q) Joshua, (r) Samuel, (s) and Elijah, (t) had shown. The same request is made by the same persons in St. Matthew xvi. 1, and obtains the same reply,—in verse 4. Compare St. John ii. 18: (where see the note): and vi. 30. Consider also, 1 Cor. i. 22.

39 But He answered and said unto them, An evil and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign: and there shall no sign be given to it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas:

He calls them "adulterous," because God had styled Himself the Husband of the Jewish Church, (u) had wedded that nation to Himself; (x) and yet they had turned away from Him, and gone after other gods (y) . . . Now, he who loves most, is most jealous; hence, such language as is held in Zechariah i. 14: viii. 2, &c.

40 for as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly:

Take notice that it is *our LORD* who tells us that it was "*a whale*" which swallowed His Prophet, (A whale: the only creature besides Man, whose creation is specially recorded!) (z) In the History itself, we read only of "*a great fish*." (a)

so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.

Thus our SAVIOUR gave them a marvellous sign; not "in the height above," but "in the depth;" (b) declaring the Prophet Jonah, "in the *heart* of the seas," (c) to have exhibited a type of His own descent into the Grave; and of His Resurrection: for as Jonah "was restored alive unto the dry land again, so should the MESSIAH, after three days, be taken out of the jaws of Death, and restored unto the land of the living." Our LORD proceeds,—

41, 42 The men of Nineveh shall rise in judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: because they repented at the preaching of Jonas: and behold, a Greater than Jonas is here. The Queen of the

(p) St. James iii. 2. (q) Exodus xvi. 4, 15, referred to in St. John vi. 30 to 32.
 (r) Joshua x. 12, 13. (s) 1 Samuel xii. 16 to 18. (t) 2 Kings i. 10 to 12.
 (u) Isaiah liv. 5. Jeremiah xxxi. 32.
 (x) Jeremiah iii. 14. Compare 2 Cor. xi. 2. Ephes. v. 23, &c. Rev. xix. 7: xxi. 2.
 (y) Jeremiah iii. 2, 8, 9. Ezekiel xxiii. 11, &c. (z) See Genesis i. 21.
 (a) Jonah i. 17. (b) Isaiah vii. 11. (c) see the margin of Jonah ii. 3.

South shall rise up in Judgment with this generation, and shall condemn it: for she came from the uttermost parts of the Earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and, behold, a Greater than Solomon *is* here.

The men of sinful and idolatrous Nineveh, who repented at the preaching of Jonah;^(d) and the Queen of Sheba, who came from far, although a heathen, to hear the wisdom of Solomon,^(e)—were the models of the converted and penitent Gentile world. But behold, One greater than either Jonah or the Queen of the South was here; and yet, He won no credit at the hands of the very nation whom He came to save. In the day of Judgment, Nineveh and Saba would therefore prove the condemnation of the Jewish people. And what must be feared for that nation when their only SAVIOUR had been finally renounced? He proceeds Himself to describe the fate which awaited them: delivering on this occasion one of the most extraordinary of all His recorded sayings.

43 When the unclean Spirit is gone out of a man,

Take notice that this is said of “*a man*.” At the end of verse 45, the warning is applied to the Jewish Nation: “Even so shall it be *also* unto this wicked generation.” It may be, that, whatever is true of communities, applies, in a manner, to individuals also. Mercifully, however, did the Divine Speaker so frame His Discourse, that the warning which he was about to deliver to the Jewish People, should first take an altogether *private* and *personal* form. Every baptized Christian, therefore, finds here a picture of his danger.

And the first thing to be noticed is, that a real *expulsion* of the evil Spirit is here spoken of. He is “gone out,” because he is “*cast out*.”^(f) The Grace of Baptism also is *real*. There has been “a Death unto Sin, and a new Birth,”—(that is, *Regeneration*.)—“unto Righteousness.” Henceforth, our prayer is that the baptized person may “*continue* CHRIST’s,” and “lead the rest of his life *according to this beginning*.”

Observe that when God “did safely lead the children of Israel through the Red Sea, figuring thereby His *Holy Baptisms*,”^(g)—it is expressly related that “Israel saw the Egyptians,” their enemies, “*dead upon the sea shore*.”^(h)

But our attention is invited to the behaviour of an unclean Spirit when it has been driven out of a man.

he walketh through dry places, seeking rest, and findeth none.

Here is a wonderful statement! Behold, the veil is rent away, even by the Hand of the CREATOR Himself, from the unseen part of Creation: and we learn the behaviour of a fallen Angel,—an unclean Spirit, who had taken up his abode in a human body, but had been driven out from thence!

He is restless. “Rest” and “Quietness,”⁽ⁱ⁾—“sitting still,”^(k) “patient abiding,”^(l)—is the portion of the good: but “the wicked are like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest . . . There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked.”^(m) . . . The unclean Spirit “goes to and fro in the Earth,—walks up and down in it,”⁽ⁿ⁾—restless and miserable. He seeketh rest,—but findeth none. Consider the behaviour of the Demoniae, as described by St. Mark v. 2 to 5: and by St. Luke viii. 29.

But what are “dry,” (or, as it is here, “*waterless*”) places? We gratefully accept the suggestion of a great writer:—“probably, the barren wilds of Heathenism, on which the dew of Grace have not descended; and where there are no shoots of Divine planting to corrupt or destroy.”^(o) Then it is that he bethinks himself of trying to regain his ancient habitation.”

44 Then he saith, I will return into my house from whence I came out; and when he is come, he findeth *it* empty, swept, and garnished.

(d) Jonah iii. 5 to 10.

(e) 1 Kings x. 1, &c., and 2 Chron. ix. 1, &c.

(f) See above, verses 24, 26, 27, 28.

(g) See the first prayer in the Baptismal service.

(h) Exodus xiv. 30.

(i) Isaiah xxx. 15.

(k) Isaiah xxx. 7.

(l) Psalm ix. 18. Compare 1 St. Peter iii. 4, and Psalm xxxvii. 9.

(m) Isaiah lvii. 21. Compare xlviii. 22.

(n) Job i. 7, and ii. 2. Compare 1 St. Pet. v. 8.

(o) Consider St. Luke viii. 6.

So "empty, swept, and garnished" with all spiritual graces, did Satan find the Temple of the Lord's Body, after His Baptism,—when he made that fierce assault upon Him to which we give the name of "*the Temptation*." Not that there had been any expulsion of Evil in *that* case. God forbid! The very thought were blasphemous. But see the note on St. Luke iv. 1.

"Empty, swept, and garnished," doubtless, and in no ordinary manner, did the same accursed Spirit find Judas Iscariot; when for three whole years He had followed the footsteps of the Holy One.(p) Yea, he had just received from his Divine Master's Hand the Bread of Life, and the Cup of Salvation, when, (as for the second time we read,) "*Satan entered into him*."(q) How solemn a warning for ourselves! See the note on St. John xiii. 27.

45 Then goeth he, and taketh with himself seven other spirits more wicked than himself,

Strange things are discovered to us here, at every step. We learn that there are degrees of wickedness in the evil Spirits; and these maintain possession with proportionate power; see St. Matthew xvii. 21. We learn too that there is no small amount of plan and design on the part of the Devil and his evil agents, in order to achieve their accursed purposes. Thus, to regain possession of one miserable man, from whom CHRIST's power had expelled him, (without adding the injunction—"and enter no more into him,")(r) we find an unclean Spirit making a league with "seven other spirits more wicked than himself." Compare St. Luke viii. 2. Consider also St. Luke viii. 30, and see the note there. The Reader will find some additional remarks on the present words in the note on St. Luke xi. 26.

Here the description ends; and we must supply the rest of the picture for ourselves. Evil suggestions, adapted to the age and sex, the peculiar character, habits, temper, pursuits, condition;—trials, multiplied, and varying, and various:—in some such form, doubt not that the attack was conducted. Then came the yielding: at first, in thought only; but this was all the Enemy desired. He did but want a small advantage: a breach in the wall, through which to effect an entrance. At last, in an unguarded hour, he achieved his wicked purpose. The band of evil Spirits have overcome the man,—

and they enter in, and dwell there:

"Had that house been guarded by Watchfulness and Prayer, this sad result had been impossible. The good man watching against the thief's approach, would not have suffered his house to be broken through:(s) and the Devil, resisted by the prayer of Faith, would have fled away."(t) The soul, aware of its weak points, and those parts of its nature against which old sins might most easily direct their attacks, should have kept a vigilant guard. But in the case before us there had been no watchfulness: no earnest cry to God, who, for CHRIST's sake, gives the aid of His Holy Spirit to all who ask Him.(u) And we behold the fearful consequence.

and the last *state* of that man is worse than the first.

"For," (as St. Peter declares,) "if after they have escaped the pollutions of the World, through the knowledge of the LORD and SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, they are again entangled therein, and overcome,—the latter end is worse with them than the beginning. For it had been better for them not to have known the way of Righteousness, than, after they have known it, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them."(x)

Such is the fearful commentary of the Spirit on a state of relapse into Sin. God of His Mercy preserve us from it! See more in the note on the last half of St. Luke xi. 26. Our Lord proceeds to show the purpose with which He had delivered these memorable words; applying His remarks to the case of the Jewish Nation.

Even so shall it be also unto this wicked generation.

(p) St. Luke xxii. 3.

(q) St. John xiii. 27.

(r) St. Mark ix. 25.

(s) St. Luke xii. 39.

(t) St. James iv. 7.

(u) St. Luke xi. 13. Compare St. James i. 5, 6, 7: and the places in the margin.

(x) See 2 St. Peter ii. 20, 21, and following verses.

Like to the case of the individual just described, our LORD says would be the case of that "wicked generation." See the beginning of the first note on verse 43. The Kingdom of Heaven had come very nigh to them indeed.^(y) The Enemy had been forcibly expelled from their borders. Fearful in proportion must be the relapse. The end of the matter was, that "the unclean spirits rushed in with sevenfold vigour and malignity, and made of Jerusalem before its fall a hell, of confusion and misery, to which the Gentile world has no parallel."

46, 47 While He yet talked to the people, behold, *His* Mother and His Brethren stood without, desiring to speak with Him. Then one said unto Him, Behold, Thy Mother and Thy Brethren stand without, desiring to speak with Thee.

These were our Blessed LORD's cousins. See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 55. Not only cousins,—but uncles and nephews,^(z) and indeed all near kinsmen, were accounted "brethren." A wise Bishop has bid us observe that, "although His Mother and His Brethren be named together, yet they are never called the sons of His Mother; and the question is not whether CHRIST had any brethren, but whether His Mother brought forth any more children."

48, 49, 50 But He answered and said unto him that told Him, Who is My Mother? and who are My Brethren? And He stretched forth His hand towards His Disciples, and said, Behold My Mother and My Brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of My FATHER which is in Heaven, the same is My Brother, and Sister, and Mother.

See the concluding note on the third chapter of St. Mark's Gospel. The Reader is also referred to a few words on St. Luke viii. 21,—where our LORD is found to have repeated either the saying, or the sentiment, which He delivered on the present occasion. It cannot be necessary to point out that He thereby neither disclaimed the Mother who bore Him; nor spoke slightly of the most precious of earthly ties. He does not disparage Relationship; but he elevates Obedience. In the words of wise Bishop Pearson,—“since He came not to do His own will, but the will of Him that sent Him, He admits no brotherhood but with such as do the same.”

(y) See above, ver. 28.

(z) Genesis xiii. 8: xiv. 16: xxix. 12, 15. Lev. xxv. 48, 49.

THE PRAYER.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast knit together Thine elect in one communion and fellowship, in the mystical Body of Thy SON CHRIST our LORD; Grant us grace so to follow Thy blessed Saints in all virtuous and godly living, that we may come to those unspeakable joys, which Thou hast prepared for them that unfeignedly love Thee: through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER XIII.

3 *The parable of the Sower and the seed: 18 the exposition of it. 24 The parable of the Tares, 31 of the Mustard seed, 33 of the Leaven, 44 of the hidden Treasure, 45 of the Pearl, 47 of the Draw net cast into the sea: 53 and how CHRIST is condemned of His own countrymen.*

THIS Chapter is the very Treasury of parables. Seven Parables are here found together. So rich a cluster,—“so many and so costly pearls,”—are nowhere else in the Gospels to be seen “strung upon a single thread.”

1, 2 The same day went JESUS out of the house, and sat by the sea side. And great multitudes were gathered together unto Him, so that He went into a ship, and sat; and the whole multitude stood on the shore.

The “Great multitudes” on the shore were doubtless the cause why our SAVIOUR “went into a Ship:” they must have thronged and crowded Him. Moreover, no position more convenient for His Divine purpose can be conceived, than the position which He chose. Yet, doubt not but what the act was full of mysterious significance as well; for not our LORD’s sayings only, but His acts were parables also. *That Ship* offers a perpetual type of the Church,—in which CHRIST is; and where, “without a parable” He may be said not to speak. But hereafter all will be made plain,—as was the case *then* also. See St. Mark iv. 34. Consider also St. Mark iv. 11.

3 And He spake many things unto them in parables, saying,

Our LORD proceeded “to open His Mouth in parables,—to utter things which had been kept secret from the foundation of the world.” See ver. 35, and the note there. That is, He now delivered Divine Instruction under the form of Comparisons drawn from natural objects. This method was not unusual in the East. Three famous specimens are supplied in the Old Testament, by Jotham’s parable of the Trees, (a) (though *that* is rather a Fable than a Parable,)—Nathan’s parable of the Ewe-lamb, (b)—and the woman of Tekoah’s parable. (c) It is not asserted, indeed, that the Blessed Speaker had never spoken a parable before; (for we know that He *had*;) yet is the present clearly set before us as *the beginning* of parables in a certain sense. In other words, our LORD commenced from this time *the practice* of teaching in parables; and, as the inquiry of the Disciples in ver. 10, suggests, it was a new thing with Him to deliver Instruction in this form.

The parable of “the Sower,” therefore, with which the Divine Speaker commences, is entitled to very unusual attention. Its exceeding importance, its depth and fullness of wonder, may not for an instant be doubted: nor is it hard to perceive many of its claims thus to lie at the foundation of “all parables:”—see St. Mark iv. 13. It treats of the main thing of all,—God’s Holy Word; and the reception which it meets with among mankind. A mirror is thus held up to us, in which we behold ourselves, and the dangers which surround us: at the same time, by the illustration which our Blessed LORD employs, we are taught what manner of persons we *ought* to be.

(a) Judges ix. 7 to 15.

(b) 2 Samuel xii. 1 to 4.

(c) 2 Samuel xiv. 5 to 7.

On the present parable, only a few remarks are offered in this place. Fuller notes will be found in the Commentary on St. Mark's 14th chapter,—verses 3 to 9, and 14 to 20: and the Reader is referred, once for all, to what is there written; as well as to the notes on St. Luke viii. 4 to 8, and 11 to 15.

Behold, a Sower went forth to sow;

“Went forth,”—as did our LORD from “the bosom of the FATHER,” at His Incarnation. See the note on St. Mark iv. 3.

4 and when he sowed, some *seeds* fell by the way side, and the fowls came and devoured them up:

Observe, it is not said that the Sower *sowed* the seed—by the way, on the rock, among thorns, and into good ground: but that it “*fell*” there. The Sower sowed well. It was *the soil* which was evil.

5, 6 Some fell upon stony places, where they had not much earth: and forthwith they sprung up, because they had no deepness of earth. And when the sun was up, they were scorched; and because they had no root, they withered away.

See the notes on St. Mark iv. 4 and 6.

7 And some fell among thorns; and the thorns sprung up, and choked them:

“So then, *this* is not all,—to have the Word, and to hear it; as if that would serve our turn and save us, as we commonly fancy. Multitudes under the continual sound of the Word, yet remain lifeless and fruitless, and die in their sins.”—See the note on St. Mark iv. 7.

8 But other fell into good ground, and brought forth fruit, some an hundred-fold, some sixty-fold, some thirty-fold.

Consider what is implied thereby: namely, *the abundant fruits* of Faith,—*the mighty harvest* of good works,—which the Word of God is expected to produce in all of us, who hear! And this is, doubtless, the view of the question which concerns us most.

But those whose office it is to teach, will do well further to reflect, that the three degrees of success enumerated, are, severally, the rewards,—(let us never be so presumptuous as to call them the *results*,)—of different degrees of care bestowed upon the soil by the Husbandman. Great pains and care are requisite to procure even the lowest rate of increase:—far more toil must be expended, if he would earn a double blessing. But, (in the language of the Farm,) it must be *Spade-Husbandry*,—nay more, there must be pains bestowed on each individual plant,—if the Spiritual Husbandman would secure the increase which attended Isaac's sowing. See Genesis xxvi. 12.

See more, in the note on St. Mark iv. 8.

9 Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

In the success which the Seed met with, there had been great variety, we see; yet only *one* Seed,—only *one* Sower! “In hearing of the Word,” (as a pious writer has remarked,) “men look usually too much upon men; and forget from what spring the Word hath its power. They observe too narrowly the different hands of the sowers, and too little depend on His hand, who is LORD of both Seed-time and Harvest.” In other words, they think not enough of God: and they attend not enough to *themselves*.

Let these and the like reflections be ours, as often as we read the parables of our SAVIOUR CHRIST. So shall we best show ourselves mindful of the memorable warning of the SPIRIT, in ver. 9: concerning which, see the note on St. Mark iv. 9.

10 And the Disciples came, and said unto Him, Why speakest Thou unto them in parables?

This took place afterwards,—in the House. See St. Mark iv. 10, and the note there.

11 He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven, but to them it is not given.

What St. Matthew, throughout his Gospel, calls “the Kingdom of Heaven,”—that, the other Evangelists call “the Kingdom of GOD.”—The phrase is used with different shades of meaning; but it generally denotes the Gospel Dispensation,—of which the Christian Church is the greatest material feature.

“*The Mysteries of the Kingdom of Heaven*,”—denotes all those particulars respecting the nature and history of the Gospel Dispensation, which has been for so many ages kept secret, but which were now at last about to be revealed. Consider the following texts,—Romans xvi. 25, 26. 1 Cor. ii. 7, 8. Ephes. iii. 9, 10. Coloss. i. 26.—Take notice, however, that it was through no partiality on the part of ALMIGHTY GOD,—no arbitrary and blind decree,—that the Apostles were given to know those “Mysteries.” Be sure of *that*. The reason of this favour shown them by our LORD, follows in the next verse: and see the note on ver. 13.

12 For whosoever hath, to him shall be given, and he shall have more abundance; but whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken away even that he hath.

So that, in reward of what the Disciples “*had*,”—call it Faith, or Love, or Use of Opportunities, or Improvement of Privileges,—more and more Blessings are promised. The opposite state is denoted by the expression, “*hath not*.” *Something*, indeed, even the wicked man hath, perforce; yet is it a mere unreality,—a thing, which deserves not the name of a possession. Scarcely indeed can he be said to “*have*” it. He but “*seemeth to have*,”—as it is said in St. Luke viii. 18. Whatever it may be, it “shall be taken away” from him.

A most precious promise,—a most solemn and emphatic warning also, truly; which are found to have been uttered by our LORD on at least three different occasions. Compare the language of St. Luke viii. 18; and see the note on St. Mark iv. 25.

The Jewish nation, as a body, heard our LORD’s Discourses indeed, but closed their hearts against the Heavenly Doctrine which they contained. They beheld His Humanity, but refused to discern therein His Divinity.

13 Therefore speak I to them in Parables; because they seeing see not; and hearing they hear not, neither do they understand.

It is here declared, therefore, that those who—blessed, as these men had been, with the sight and hearing of “things kept secret from the foundation of the world,”(*d*)—would neither see nor hear the things which concerned their peace, should be punished, by having the mysteries of the Gospel henceforth exhibited to them under a veil and darkly. As St. Mark expresses it,—“that seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand.”(*e*) In other words, they were threatened with what is called *judicial blindness*. Thus, after Pharaoh, (a great example of Sin in the Old Testament,) had hardened his own heart five times in succession, in resistance to the ALMIGHTY,(*f*)—we are expressly told that, next, God *hardened his heart*.(*g*)

Thus, then, our LORD explains his adoption of Parables as a means of Instruction. In reply to which, it will perhaps be thought that, in point of fact, His Parables were yet (in a manner) plain and clear;—that they often set forth His

(*d*) See below ver. 35, and the note there.

(*e*) St. Mark iv. 12.

(*f*) Exodus vii. 22: viii. 15, 19, 32: ix. 7.

(*g*) Exodus ix. 12, (compare iv. 21; vii. 3,) 35: x. 20, 27: xi. 10.

Divine meaning with greater point and force than could have been attained by any other method. Nor is this denied. But a doctrine, or a precept, or a future event, shadowed forth under the veil of a Parable, is yet a hidden thing,—revealed only to those who have “ears to hear.” And in this *symbolic manner*, as it seems, did our Divine Lord set forth prophetically the course of His future treatment of the Jewish nation:—as well as explain to mankind how He deals with individual hearts. In illustration of what has been said, it may be pointed out that the prophecy in Malachi iii. 1,—which, in a certain sense, doubtless, is yet future, was fulfilled, in a degree, by the incident recorded in St. Matthew xxi. 12: and yet more faintly, but no less truly, in that more noiseless, yet equally sudden coming, described by St. Luke—ii. 22. In the same manner, our Lord’s *first Advent* was symbolical of His *second*.

14, 15 And in them is fulfilled the prophecy of Esaias, which saith, By hearing ye shall hear, and shall not understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall not perceive: for this people’s heart is waxed gross, and *their ears* are dull of hearing, and *their eyes* they have closed; lest at any time they should see with *their eyes*, and hear with *their ears*, and should understand with *their heart*, and should be converted, and I should heal them.

The quotation is from Isaiah vi. 9, 10: and surely the declaration is a very remarkable one, that these words,—spoken originally of the Jewish people by Isaiah the prophet,—should have had so perfect an application to the same nation in the days of MESSIAH, that the prophecy could be said to have been then *fulfilled*. St. John and St. Paul, on two memorable occasions, so applied the words of the Evangelical Prophet.^(h)

Well worthy of notice are those words,—“*Their eyes they have closed.*” The SPIRIT thus speaks because the human Will is free. If men sin, it is because *they prefer* Darkness to Light.

“Lest they should be converted and I should heal them:”—which proves that Conversion, (that is, Repentance,) was possible for them; and that Salvation would have followed on their Repentance. Compare the last words of St. Mark iv. 12.

16, 17 But blessed *are* your eyes, for they see; and your ears, for they hear. For verily I say unto you, That many prophets and righteous *men* have desired to see *those things* which ye see, and have not seen *them*; and to hear *those things* which ye hear, and have not heard *them*.

A wondrous statement on the lips of Him who had been “the Desire of all Nations.”—whose “Day” Abraham had “seen,”⁽ⁱ⁾—and all the Patriarchs and Prophets^(k) had, in a manner, desired;—but only “afar off,”^(l) and dimly. “Wherefore” (in the words of our VIIth Article) “they are not to be heard, which feign that the old Fathers did look only for transitory promises.” How bold is that saying of Ignatius, second bishop of Antioch; “CHRIST is *the Door*, through which enter in Abraham, and Isaac, and Jacob, and the Prophets, and the Apostles, and the Church!”

18 Hear ye therefore the Parable of the Sower.

Notice, by the way, that our Lord here supplies us with *the title* of a Parable. His Disciples furnish us with the title of another in ver. 36.

19 When any one heareth the Word of the Kingdom, and understandeth *it* not,

These words are peculiar to the present Gospel. They describe a heart which

(h) See St. John xii. 39, 40; and Acts xxviii. 25 to 27.

(k) See 1 St. Peter i. 10 to 12.

(i) St. John viii. 56.

(l) Hebrews xi. 13.

opens not to receive the heavenly seed; but presents an obdurate surface. See below ver. 23: also the note on St. Mark iv. 15.

Observe, that the explanation of the parable begins somewhat differently in St. Mark's Gospel,—iv. 14; where see the note.

then cometh the Wicked *One*, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart. This is he which received seed by the way side.

See the note on St. Mark iv. 15.

20, 21 But he that received the seed into stony places, the same is he that heareth the Word, and anon with joy receiveth it; yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while: for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the Word, by and by he is offended.

See the note on St. Mark iv. 16.

"Anon; *with joy* receiveth it." Let us dwell for a moment on this picture. Happy they, who have not experienced its truth, in a degree, in their own persons! No wonder, if the "Word of the Kingdom," especially if skillfully and sensibly delivered, pleases. It hath a ravishing beauty and sweetness of its own, which cannot fail to please. "Let it be but a fancy," says Leighton, "yet it is a fine pleasant one . . . The Description of the New Jerusalem,^(m) suppose it to be but a dream, or one of the Visions of the Night, yet, it is passing fine; it must needs please a mind that heeds what is said of it." As the LORD declared to Ezekiel, His prophet,—“Lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument.”⁽ⁿ⁾

But it is there added,—“They *hear* thy words, but they *do* them not.” And so here, it is heard “with joy;” and springs up presently. Men commend it, and, it may be, repeat some passages; yea, possibly, desire to be like it,—to have such and such graces as are recommended,—and straightway think they have them. And to all appearance, some change is wrought; but it is not deep enough.” Consider Balaam's wish, in Numbers xxiii. 10, and compare it with Balaam's end.

22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the Word; and the care of this World, and the deceitfulness of Riches, choke the Word, and he becometh unfruitful.

“Cares” and “Riches,”—these, then, are the “thorns and briars” which prove so fatal to the growth of the spiritual life! “Break up your fallow ground,” spake the LORD by His prophet, to the men of Judah and Jerusalem; “and *sow not among thorns.*”^(o)

“The *deceitfulness* of Riches:”—that must be because “They that will be rich, fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which draw men in destruction and perdition.”^(p)

See the note on St. Mark iv. 19.

23 But he that received seed into the good ground is he that heareth the Word, and understandeth *it*; which also beareth fruit, and bringeth forth, some an hundred-fold, some sixty, some thirty.

Take notice, that this last is the case of one “that heareth the Word and *understandeth* it:”—the opposite case, therefore, to that mentioned in ver. 19.

And further let it be remarked, before we pass on, that there is no reason why the three evil states before described, should not in the end, by God's Grace, be brought to resemble this: even by the influence upon them *of that very Word* whose fruitfulness they, at first, prevented. “He that plougheth should *plough in hope,*”^(q)—is expressly said of the Ministerial Labourer. The barren highway may therefore yet become the yielding furrow. And why may not the rock be

(m) Rev. xxi.

(p) 1 Tim. vi. 9.

(n) Ezekiel xxxiii. 32.

(q) 1 Cor. ix. 10.

(o) Jeremiah iv. 3.

crushed,—the thorns yet given to the burning? “Is not My Word like a fire?” saith the Lord; and *like a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces?*”(r)

See the note on St. Mark iv. 20.

24, 25 Another Parable put He forth unto them, saying,

The parable of “the Tares” follows; in which, a very instructive and striking circumstance is lost sight of, in consequence of the word here employed by our Translators. *Tares* are easily distinguished from Wheat: but the plant which grows among the corn so abundantly in Palestine,—(here called “Tares,” because *that* is the nearest word which our language supplies,) is so *so like Wheat in appearance* that a careless eye would hardly detect the difference. When closely examined, however, the plant is found to have no corns in the ear: it is a mere barren bearded husk. How apt a type is thereby furnished of the wicked,—growing up among the just, and, outwardly at least, not to be distinguished from them!

But the beauty of the Divine image is yet more striking. Wheat and Tares are plants of a different kind: but the plant which our Lord speaks of, (here called Tares,) is only a degenerate kind of Wheat. Let it not be said therefore that some are *created* for the burning; while others are destined for the Heavenly Garner,—“elect” from their Birth. For the present parable gives no countenance to so monstrous an opinion; which is, in fact, refuted by almost every page of Scripture.

The Kingdom of Heaven is likened unto a Man which sowed good seed in his field:

We shall be told in ver. 37, that the “man” here described is “the Son of Man;” and that “the field is the World.” He is called an “*Housholder*” in ver. 27. And *that* is because, though all the Field is God’s, yet hath He a House within it, in which He chiefly delights to dwell.

but while men slept, His Enemy came and sowed Tares among the Wheat, and went his way.

“While men *slept*!” We are warned thereby against sloth and supineness, which give the Enemy occasion,—both in respect of others and of ourselves.

“*Sowed* Tares.” Take notice that this was no chance growth,—the result of careless Husbandry; as when Tares infest *our* corn-fields. (“What could have been done more . . . that I have not done?”(s))—may the Divine Husbandman well ask.) But the plant described above, in the first note on ver. 24, was the result of *active mischief* on the part of the Enemy. Such wickedness is said to be practised to this day, in some parts of the world.

Here, then, is a prophecy of the speedy growth of error, (“all things that offend,”—as it is said in ver. 41,) after the sowing of the good seed:—and since error cannot exist apart from erring men; nor sin, apart from sinners; it amounts to a declaration that “they which do iniquity” would soon be found in the Church, mixed up, and growing side by side, with the righteous. “The Children of the Wicked One,” as it is said in ver. 38, mixed up with “the Children of the Kingdom.”—It is further declared that the Enemy, who should be the author of all this evil, “is the Devil.” He did the mischief and departed.

26 But when the blade was sprung up, and brought forth fruit, then appeared the Tares also.

Observe, that the Tares are discovered by the fruitfulness of the Wheat!

Thus, then, it is prophesied that the hypocrites, and the openly wicked, shall be seen standing side by side with those who bring forth much fruit. And this mixed aspect which the Church presented from the very beginning,—has presented in all ages,—presents at this time,—and will continue to present to the end of the World, is much to be noted as one of the things which our Lord distinctly foretold; and of which he here forewarns us. It was set forth *in type*,—by Noah’s Ark, which contained alike clean and unclean beasts: *in vision*,—by the great sheet which St.

Peter saw let down from Heaven, wherein were all manner of beasts: *in comparison*,—by the threshing-floor, whereon is laid wheat and chaff: and by the great House, in which there are not only vessels of Gold and silver, but also of wood and of earth; and some to honour some to dishonour: *(t) in parable*,—by the sheep and the goats; the net which contained fish of every kind; the tares which grew among the wheat.

We may not separate from the Church, therefore, on pretence of belonging to some holier society within it. This is *Schism*. We thereby, in effect, put ourselves out of the Church, and endanger our own Salvation. We are guilty of great presumption, and self-conceit. We pretend to know the secrets of other men's hearts; whereas a little reflection might convince us that we know not the secrets of our own. The LORD "searcheth all hearts;" *(u)* and "The LORD—knoweth them that are His;" *(x)* Let this thought suffice us.

True indeed it is that "the King's Daughter is all glorious within;" *(y)* but this glory of the Church is hidden from men's eyes. The Church Catholic, (that is the Church *universal*), is also "*Holy*,"—as we assert in the Apostles' Creed; but this means not that every one, visibly in communion with her, is holy also. True moreover it is, that into "the Holy Jerusalem," "there shall in no wise enter anything that defileth:" but only "they which are written in the LAMB'S Book of Life;" *(z)* All this, however, will be *hereafter* and not now. The "Holy City, New Jerusalem," *(a)* the "glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing," *(b)* is the Church,—not "militant," as it is "here in Earth;" but *triumphant*, as it will hereafter be, in *Heaven*.

See more in the note on ver. 38.

27 So the servants of the Householder came and said unto Him, Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? from whence then hath it Tares?

"The Servants of the Householder" are not the same with "the Reapers,"—for the two are distinguished in ver. 30. These last are declared to be "the Angels,"—to whom the care of *all the field* is entrusted. Compare Zechariah vi. 4 to 7: Daniel x. 13, 21: xii. 1, &c. But the Servants, inhabiting the House, *(c)*—will be such as "Simon Peter, a Servant and an Apostle of JESUS CHRIST;" *(d)* and "James, a Servant of God, and of the LORD JESUS CHRIST;" *(e)* and "Paul, a Servant of JESUS CHRIST;" *(f)* with their successors to the end of the world. "The Servants of the Householder," are in fact, the faithful, generally. And take note that the sight of wickedness, or rather, *the origin of Evil*, fills these with perplexity. "Sir, didst not thou sow good seed in thy field? *From whence* then hath it tares?"—words, which are a prophecy of the disquiet which ensued at the Church's discovery of error within her pale; and which, in fact, nearly rent her in sunder.

28 He said unto them, An Enemy hath done this. The servants said unto him, Wilt thou then that we go and gather them up?

So zealous for God's Honour are His faithful Servants!

Compare the language of "the sons of Thunder,"—in St. Luke ix. 54. Consider, again, the remonstrance of the Prophet Jeremiah,—xiii. 1 to 4:—the complaint of the Psalmist,—lxxiii. 12 to 14:—and, earlier yet, the inquiry of holy Job,—xxi. 7 to 15. Take notice, further, that these "Servants of the Householder," had the present fate of the wicked been left to them, would assuredly have "gone and gathered up the Tares," forthwith.—"Up, LORD, and let not man have the upper hand!" *(g)* Such has been the impatient language of God's Saints in all ages. The very souls beneath the altar, "of them that were slain for the Word of God, and for the Testimony which they held," are found to cry, with a loud voice,—*"How long, O LORD, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the Earth?"* *(h)* Contrast this with the voice of Angels,—Zech. i. 12

(t) 2 Tim. ii. 20.

(y) Psalm xlv. 13.

(b) Ephes. v. 27.

(e) St. James i. 1.

(u) 1 Chron. xxviii. 9.

(z) Rev. xxi. 10, 27.

(c) See the last note on ver. 24.

(f) Romans i. 1.

(h) Rev. vi. 9, 10.

(x) 2 Tim. ii. 19.

(a) Rev. xxi. 2.

(d) 2 St. Peter i. 1.

(g) Psalms ix. 19.

29 But he said, Nay; lest while ye gather up the Tares, ye root up also the Wheat with them.

Partly, because there is a risk of even mistaking the one for the other; partly, (and chiefly,) because there is such entanglement between the good and the wicked,—the one are so entwined with the other,—that to effect a severance, without fatally disturbing the former, would be next to impossible.

Consider how this same doctrine is set forth by the comparison of the evil and the just to chaff and wheat; which *cannot*, in fact, be severed till “the Harvest.” They grow on one and the same stem. In a certain sense, they make part of each other; and are essential, the one to the other.

This reply of “the Householder,” therefore, recommends the Grace of *Patience*; concerning which, see the end of the note on St. Matthew iv. 7, and the references there.—It further suggests that a great and admitted evil must sometimes be endured, rather than the safety of that which is certainly good, should be endangered.

30 Let both grow together until the Harvest: and in the time of Harvest I will say to the Reapers, Gather ye together first the Tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the Wheat into My barn.

Now, “the Harvest is the end of the World,”—as we read in ver. 39: “and the Reapers are the Angels.”—the interpretation of this verse is found below, from verse 40 to verse 43.

Note here, the long-suffering goodness of God: “Let both grow together.” Let both, for the present, share the same rain, and dew, and sunshine: “for He maketh His sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.”(i) But does this proceed from *indifference* on His part? God forbid? From some defect in the Divine contrivance, then, which makes interference impossible? Far from it. The reason of the delay is expressly given by St. Paul, in Romans ii. 4:—and St. Peter alludes to that passage in his “beloved brother’s” Epistle, in 2 St. Peter iii. 9 and 15.—All this is but for a time, however. “He hath appointed a Day, in the which He will judge the World in righteousness.”(k)

“Into *bundles*.” Does this perhaps denote the different classes of offenders?—Concerning the “Barn,” see the latter part of St. Matthew iii. 12, and the note there.

31 Another Parable put He forth unto them, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is like to a grain of Mustard seed, which a man took, and sowed in His field:

Seed is again made the instrument of Heavenly teaching. The same “man” also again comes before us,—and we are again reminded of the “Field” which was his. See above, the latter part of verse 24, and the note there. This Parable, however, is entirely given by St. Mark,—iv. 30 to 32; and has been so fully remarked upon in the notes there, that it becomes unnecessary to say anything concerning it, in this place. For its connection with what goes before, see the concluding note on the present Chapter.

32 which indeed is the least of all seeds: but when it is grown, it is the greatest among herbs, and becometh a tree, so that the birds of the air come and lodge in the branches thereof.

See the notes on St. Mark iv. 31, 32.

A parable follows, which, like the rest, also relates to the Kingdom of Heaven. It is found to recur, like the preceding parable, in the thirteenth chapter of St. Luke. See the note on St. Luke xiii. 21.

(i) St. Matthew v. 45.

(k) Acts xvii. 31.

33 Another parable spake He unto them: The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto Leaven: which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened.

Our LORD speaks of Himself under the image of a Woman, also in the parable of the Lost piece of Silver, St. Luke xv. 8. And as if to glorify all lowly occupations, on this occasion, as on *that*, it is a woman engaged in a poor domestic task. There,—she sweeps the House: here,—she mixes leaven with meal!

Take notice, then, that she "*hides*" the leaven in the meal: which reminds us of the relation of the Church with respect to the World. At first, it was a thing wholly hidden; and even now, the Great Reality is wondrously obscured,—in large Cities especially. Notice the language of verse 44.

Yet, what follows? "*till the whole was leavened.*" Here, then, is a prophecy of what will be hereafter; and which has already come to pass, in a degree. It is implied that, by virtue of the law of its nature, the Church of CHRIST must spread and make its way. As Leaven, when hid in meal, secretly and silently pervades the whole lump, even so does it fare with the Gospel. It possesses moreover *a transforming power*: so acting upon the thing it encounters, that, in the end, "the whole is leavened:" becomes changed, and partakes of another nature.

The property of Leaven, our LORD alluded to on another occasion,—when He warned His Disciples against "*the Doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.*"(l)

But why is it said, "*Three measures of meal?*" May it be because the great divisions of the Earth were anciently looked upon as so many? Or is it because the individual Man is made up of "Spirit, and Soul, and Body?"—as we are so often reminded? Or is it only because the threefold division is so favourite an one with the SPIRIT—containing, as it does, a perpetual reference to the mystery of the Blessed Trinity? . . . Traces of it may be found in every part of Scripture,—from Genesis to Revelation.

Lastly, it is right, in considering a parable, to notice its private and personal teaching,—as well as its general and national application. The parable of the Leaven reminds us of our need of that "daily renewal" by God's Holy Spirit, which we pray for in the Collect for Christmas-Day. It is not enough to have received the Heavenly Gift in Holy Baptism. Its influence must be continual upon the heart and life; until the Christian has undergone that Transfiguration into the likeness of his LORD, of which the Great Apostle speaks,—in 2 Corinthians iii. 18.

34 All these things spake JESUS unto the multitudes in Parables; and without a Parable spake he not unto them:

St. Mark,—iv. 33,—adds, that "*with many such parables* spake He the Word unto them, as they were able to bear it."

35 that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, I will open My mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the World.

Surely, a most surprising statement! To read Psalm lxxviii. 2, *who* would suppose that the scope of the Writer reached on, so far? . . . Yet is this no solitary example of the *unexpected* fulfilment of prophetic sayings. See the notes on St. Matthew iv. 14: St. Luke i. 27, and ii. 38, and on St. Matthew xxvii. 9, 10.

Take notice that "the Prophet" here spoken of was "Asaph the Seer,"(m) a Levite, who lived in the time of David the King.(n)

36 Then Jesus sent the multitude away, and went into the house.

St. Mark here adds,—"*and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His Disciples.*"(o) One specimen of Divine Exposition has been already given,—ver. 10 to 23. Another follows. It is probable that the Disciples obtained from our SAVIOUR an explanation of each of His parables.

(l) St. Matthew xvi. 6, 11, 12.

(n) 1 Chron. xv. 17, 19, &c.

(m) 2 Chron. xxix. 30.

(o) St. Mark iv. 34.

37 And His Disciples came unto Him, saying, Declare unto us the parable of the Tares of the field. He answered and said unto them, He that soweth the good seed is the Son of Man :

It seems impossible to over-estimate the preciousness of what follows. How perplexed should we for ever have been,—and how uncertain as to the actual intention of our Lord's parables,—had He not thus graciously explained two, at such length, Himself!

38, 39, 40 The field is the World :

The Field, then, (it may be said by some one who reads the note on verse 25,) is not the *Church*, but *the World*! What becomes therefore of the teaching drawn from this parable in the note just referred to? The objection is almost as ancient as the parable.

But the answer is almost as obvious as the objection, and quite as ancient. *Of course* it was the World,—not the Church, but *the World*,—where the seed was sown : but the seed was no sooner sown, than the foundations of *the Church*, (the “Kingdom of Heaven,” as it is called in ver. 24,) were laid ; and when the blade was sprung up, since it covered *the Field*, there began to be a “Holy Church universal *throughout the World*.” Then it was that *the Tares* began to show themselves ;—so closely resembling the wheat, and so entangled with it, that it was impossible to separate them. How could the admixture of evil with good, in the visible Church, have been more aptly set forth? The parable testifies to the great Truth that all *within* the Church are not *of* it : it admits, or rather asserts, that many who profess and call themselves Christians, do not deserve the name : but it contains a no less solemn warning against those who would separate themselves from the Church, on the plea that it is not *all* Holy. It removes all ground of surprise at the sad spectacle we daily witness ; for it is nothing less than a *Prophecy* that so it would be.

the good seed are the Children of the Kingdom ; but the Tares are the Children of the Wicked *One* ;

To be “*the children of the Kingdom*,” &c., means those who will *inherit* the Kingdom ; that is, *the just*. Consider the following texts, St. Matthew xxiii. 15. St. Luke x. 6 : xvi. 8 : xx. 36. 1 Thess. v. 5.

the Enemy that sowed them is the Devil :

He means not that their life or faculties,—but all by which they are wicked, and fitted for Eternal punishment, is the work of the Evil Spirit : “while everything that is good in any, and affects their growth to everlasting Salvation,” is from the FATHER of Lights ; bestowed on them in, and through His Son,—who is the CREATOR of all things.

the Harvest is the end of the World ; and the reapers are the Angels. As therefore the Tares are gathered and burned in the fire ; so shall it be in the end of this world.

Compare what is said in St. Matthew xv. 13.

41, 42 The Son of Man shall send forth His Angels, and they shall gather out of His Kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity ;

“Things that offend,”—(“scandals” as it is said in the margin,)—are all hindrances to Salvation, literally *stumbling-blocks*, which are thrown in the way of Believers. He that tempts another to sin, is, in the language of Scripture, a *stumbling-block* in his way. Hence our Lord's awful rebuke to Simon Peter,—in St. Matthew xvi. 23 ; where the same word occurs which our Lord employs in this place.

42 and shall cast them into a furnace of fire; there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

An ancient Archbishop, who spoke so eloquently that he was styled "John of the Golden Mouth," has a beautiful remark on this. "Behold," he says, "the unspeakable Love of God towards men! He is quick to show Mercy—slow to punish. When He sows, [—see above, ver. 37,—] He sows Himself; when He punishes, *He punishes by others*,—sending His Angels to do *that*!"

See the note on St. Matthew viii. 12.

43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

"As the Sun:" for that is the brightest object in Creation. They will "shine out;" as the sun does, when the clouds have rolled away. The future condition of the glorified body is always spoken of as exceeding bright and glorious. Consider the following striking passages:—St. Matthew xvii. 2, with which compare Rev. i. 16, and Acts xxvi. 13.—Daniel xii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 41.

The parable of "the Hid Treasure" follows; and then the parable of "the Pearl." Take notice, that they were delivered *in the House*,—unlike those which go before. The Disciples, alone, therefore, hear them. And it is worth observing that they are, so to say, of a private and personal kind. They set forth how men ought individually to feel towards the Gospel; and stimulate the affections rather than inform the mind.

44 Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Treasure hid in a field;

"Treasure:"—consider Psalm xix. 10: cxix. 72, 127. Proverbs viii. 10, 11, 19. Compare Colossians ii. 3.

"Treasure *hid*:"—see the note on ver. 33. "In a *field*:"—see verses 24 and 31, and the note on the former place.

the which when a man hath found,

Every word here is precious. "Which when a man hath *found*:" but it is he that *seeketh*, who *findeth*.^(p) "Yea, if thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy voice for Understanding; if thou *seekest* her as Silver, and *searchest* for her, *as for hid treasures*; then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God."^(q) In the Book of Proverbs, Wisdom is the name of CHRIST: so that the Wise King, (like the great Apostle) here speaks of "winning CHRIST."^(r) Compare Job iii. 21.

he hideth;

Mark the conduct of the sincere Believer. He doth not *talk* much about his Faith and Hope. He rather "hideth" the matter in his heart. Compare Psalm cxix. 11. Our inner life is "*hid* with CHRIST in God."^(s) It is "the *hidden* man of the heart."^(t)

Not, of course, that it is the nature of true Faith to keep the knowledge of CHRIST, a *secret*. God forbid! "Andrew *findeth* his brother Simon:" and "Philip *findeth* Nathaniel."^(u) and the woman of Samaria leaveth her water-pot, and goeth her way into the City, "and saith to the men, *Come, see*."^(x) It is ever thus. But it is one thing to burn for the Salvation of others, and to have a mighty zeal for CHRIST; quite another thing to relate "experiences," and to wear one's Religion on one's *lip*,—rather than in one's *heart*. It should be hid,—only *that it may no be lost*.

(p) St. Matthew vii. 8.

(s) Coloss. iii. 3.

(q) Proverbs ii. 3 to 5.

(t) 1 St. Peter iii. 4.

(x) St. John iv. 28, 29.

(r) Phil. iii. 8.

(u) St. John i. 41, 45.

and for joy thereof, goeth and selleth all that he hath, and buyeth that field.

Godliness hath "promise of the life that now is," as well as "of that which is to come." (y) The man in the Parable wanted to obtain the Treasure; he obtained the field, (that is the World,) as well. "Seek ye *first* the Kingdom of God,"—(the very thing this man was seeking!)"—"and His Righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." (z)

Take notice, however, that it was the Treasure,—and *the Treasure only*,—which the man in the Parable wanted. The field he regarded as an incumbrance,—a joyless barren waste. He would have possessed himself of the Treasure by itself, if he could; but he could not. Nor let us fail to observe the great truth thus set before us, that the two cannot be separated. We may not, on *this* side of Eternity, possess the Treasure apart from the Field, (that is, the world,) wherein it is hid.

Observe the temper of mind in which the man in the parable divests himself of all his goods. He is *joyous*. So then, "Joy" is another attribute of the true Believer. Consider the following texts:—Romans xii. 12: xiv. 17: xv. 3. 2 Cor. vi. 10. Galat. v. 22. Phil. i. 4: iii. 1: iv. 4. 1 Thess. i. 6: v. 16. 1 St. Peter i. 8: iv. 13, &c.

Lastly, observe what is here implied. The man must part with everything else which he possesses, in order that he may become possessed of this one chief Treasure: and he *knows* that he must. The parable assumes this fact, and implies this knowledge. He waits for no summons: (a) he prepares to do his part at once, with *joy*. (b) "What things were gain to me," says the Apostle, "those I counted loss for Christ: yea, doubtless, and I count all things but loss for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST JESUS my LORD." (c)

But, (some one will say,) was this an honourable and a commendable course, on the part of him who made so singular a discovery? Was it *honest* to buy a "Field," knowing all the while that it contained a "Treasure," which made it worth so much more? Doubtless it was not: neither does our LORD say that it was. But the morality of the man's conduct forms no part of the teaching of the Parable. The *point* of the matter is the man's eagerness to become possessed of the Treasure: or rather, the greatness of the Treasure of which he became possessed. If the man's conduct is to be further scrutinized, surely it becomes an instructive example of the great truth which our LORD delivered on another occasion; namely, that "the Children of this World are in their generation *wiser than the Children of Light*." (d) Nor should it escape notice that this Man pretended not to buy the Field for any fixed sum which might represent *its value*. He went and sold all that he had,—and the field became his.

The parable of "The Pearl" follows.

45 Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a merchant man, seeking goodly pearls:

It is possible that a contrast may be intended between him who *found* in the last parable,—and him who *seeks*, in this. If so, we are here reminded that while some persons are brought suddenly and unexpectedly to the knowledge of the things which concern their peace,—there are others, (like the Merchantman,) who find, at last, the thing of which they had been a long time in search; the *only* thing which can satisfy their needs, and appease their cravings.

This Merchantman was seeking for *many* pearls: but it was only because he little expected to meet with *one* which would make all future search for more unnecessary. They were "*goodly* pearls" he sought; and this it was which made him so eager to secure "the pearl of great price" when at last he found it. He saw its beauty, and he knew its worth, in a moment.

46 who when he had found one Pearl of great price, went and sold all that he had, and bought it.

(y) 1 Tim. iv. 8.

(z) St. Matthew vi. 33.

(a) See St. Matthew xix. 21.

(b) Compare St. Matthew iv. 20, 22: ix. 9: xix. 27, &c.

(c) Philip. iii. 7, 8.

(d) St. Luke xvi. 8.

"When he hath *found*;"—for, once more, "he that seeketh, findeth."(*e*)

"One pearl;" for God, and Truth, and the Faith, (*f*) and the Church are one: (*g*) undivided and indivisible.

A "*pearl*;"—for the pearl was, by the ancients, accounted the most costly of all jewels. There is, however, this further difference between the present resemblance and that which precedes: that whereas, before, attention was invited simply to the *value* of the prize,—here, the *outward splendour* of CHRIST'S Kingdom, "the *Beauty of Holiness*," is set forth as well. The pearl is for *ornament*.

"*Of great price*;" for "the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold."(*h*)

In the present parable, as in the former one, he that would win this greatest of Treasures is represented as *selling all that he hath*,—in order that he may obtain it. See the last note on ver. 44. Whereas, however, before, the result of his sacrifice was the possession of a *field* wherein was hid a Treasure,—here, he wins a single small object, which yet contains, collected within itself, the value dispersed before, not only throughout the Field, but throughout the several pieces of the Treasure also. "And as one who is possessed of a pearl," says an ancient Father, "himself indeed knows of his wealth, but is not known to others,—oftentimes concealing it in his hand, by reason of its small bulk,—so is it in respect of the Gospel. They who possess it, know that they are rich: the unbelievers know nothing of their treasure."

Lastly,—what is to "*buy*" the pearl here spoken of? It is, to make a huge sacrifice for it. It is, to give in exchange for it, anything which the owner may choose to demand, or be disposed to accept. With men, this is *money*. But what is God's requirement? "My son,—*Give Me thy heart*!"(*i*)

Next comes the Parable of "the Draw-net;" which, in one respect, closely resembles the Parable of the Tares. But the two are broadly distinguished. The one is a prophecy of the present: the other, of the future. The one dwells upon the mixed aspect of the Church *as it is* in the World: the other describes the final issue,—dwells only on *what will be* in the end of the World.

47 Again, the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Net, that was cast into the sea, and gathered of every kind:

How lively an appeal was this concluding parable! How must this resemblance of the Kingdom to fishes and a net have kindled the imagination of the simple Fishermen who heard! How must their very life and calling have seemed to themselves, (as indeed it was,) all a parable!

CHRIST Himself was the Great Fisherman,—who cast the net of the Gospel even while He spake. It "gathered of every kind;" for in the visible Church all classes of men are included. And not only all ranks, all classes; but also, good and bad persons alike are contained within the Church's net. See ver. 48: and compare St. Matthew xxii. 10. The same lesson which was conveyed by the parable of the Tares, is therefore conveyed by this concluding parable. See above, a long note on ver. 26; and another, on the first part of ver. 38.

The "net" here spoken of is one of that very large kind with which Fishermen capture at once a mighty shoal,—sweeping sometimes the waters of an entire bay.

48 which, when it was full, they drew to shore, and sat down, and gathered the good into vessels, but cast the bad away.

"When it was *full*;"—for it is not till God hath "accomplished the number of His elect," that the end cometh.—"*The shore*;" for it is not till they have "passed the waves of this troublesome world" that men "come to the land of Everlasting Life." And "now, the net holds good and bad mingled together; but the Shore shall discover what the net of the Church has brought to land."—The Angels "*sit down*;"—for the work here ascribed to them will be done with exceeding vigilance and care. Moreover,—*sitting* denotes *Authority*: (Consider Dan. vii. 9. Joel iii. 12. Mal. iii. 3): and *Rest*: (Consider Micah iv. 4. Zech. i. 11. Psalm xcix. 1.

(*e*) St. Matthew vii. 8.

(*f*) Ephes. iv. 5.

(*g*) Song of Solomon vi. 9.

(*h*) Proverbs iii. 14; and see the following verses.

(*i*) Proverbs xxiii. 26

St. Mark xvi. 19. Ephes. ii. 6. Rev. iii. 21: iv. 4, &c.)—They “gather the good *into vessels* ;”—for, in God’s “House, there are many mansions.” (*k*)

It is added that “the bad” shall be “cast away.” This might seem a slender penalty; but their fate is more fully disclosed in ver. 50.—And doubtless it is implied that this casting away shall take place *first*; as was expressly declared in ver. 30: for observe what is said in the next verse.

49 So shall it be at the end of the World: the Angels shall come forth, and sever the wicked from among the just,

This corresponds exactly with what was said in the parable of “the Tares.” Compare it with ver. 41: and see the note on ver. 42.

“So shall it be at the end of the World:”—our Lord Himself guides us to the point of this parable, which is a prophecy of what will be *hereafter*.

50 and shall cast them into the furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth.

This is a repetition, word for word, of ver. 42,—where reference is made to the note on St. Matthew viii. 12. But, as an ancient Bishop well remarks,—“*to fear* becomes us rather than *to expound*.” And he adds,—“The torments of sinners are pronounced in plain terms, that none might plead his ignorance; which would have been possible, had eternal punishment been threatened in obscure sayings.”

51, 52 JESUS saith unto them, Have ye understood all these things? They say unto Him, Yea, LORD. Then said He unto them, Therefore every Scribe *which is* instructed unto the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a man *that is* an householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure *things* new and old.

This seems to mean,—Ye say that ye have understood all these sayings of Mine, by which ye have been instructed concerning my future earthly Kingdom; its Obstacles,—Defilements,—Growth,—Increase,—Might,—Dignity,—Splendour,—and End. Be ye therefore, henceforth, like to the Householder; who brings forth, now, from his old stores,—now, from his new. Ye are Scribes, taught not only the learning of the Ancient Law; but the mysteries of the Gospel likewise: bring forth, therefore, henceforth, as occasion may require, now, an old truth,—now, a new one,—for the edification of “the Household of Faith.” (*l*) . . . But the saying remains obscure and difficult.

53, 54 And it came to pass, *that* when JESUS had finished these Parables, He departed thence. And when He was come into His own country, He taught them in their synagogue, insomuch that they were astonished, and said, Whence hath this *Man* this wisdom, and *these* mighty works?

“His own Country” means the city of Nazareth. Concerning the surprise excited by our Lord’s Discourse, see the last note on St. Matthew vii. The “mighty works” are again alluded to in ver. 58. Compare St. Mark vi. 2.

Take notice, that this was a *second* visit to Nazareth,—distinct from *that* recorded in St. Luke iv. 16 to 30.

55 Is not this the Carpenter’s son? is not His Mother called Mary? and His Brethren, James, and Joses, and Simon, and Judas?

“No wonder that they were mistaken in His *Brethren*,” says an ancient writer, “if they were mistaken in His *Father*.” Joseph was probably now dead; and the “brethren” here mentioned were most likely the cousins of our Lord, after the

(*k*) St. John xiv. 2. Compare the mention of “bundles,” above, in ver. 30.

(*l*) Galatians vi. 10.

flesh: sons of another Mary, who was Wife of Cleophas, and Sister of the Blessed Virgin. Nothing is more certain than that our LORD JESUS CHRIST was the First-born, and *only* Son of His Virgin Mother.

The "James" here mentioned, was the first Bishop of Jerusalem,^(m) and the author of the Epistle; but probably not an Apostle. Simon succeeded him. Their Brother "Judas" is "Jude . . . the brother of James:" author of the Epistle, and one of the Twelve. See the note on St. Matthew xii. 47.

56, 57 And His Sisters, are they not all with us? Whence then hath this *Man* all these things? And they were offended in Him. But JESUS said unto them, a Prophet is not without honour, save in his own country, and in his own house.

How nearly was this the very proverb which the same Divine Speaker had already addressed to His unbelieving countrymen,—and in the very same place! See St. Luke iv. 24. The humble connections of our Blessed LORD's Mother, and reputed Father, proved a *stumbling-block* in the way of their Faith: as it is here expressed, it "offended" them.

58 And He did not many mighty works there, because of their unbelief.

The "mighty works" which He did, are mentioned by St. Mark vi. 5: who adds,—"And *He marvelled* because of their unbelief!"

The eight Parables which our LORD is declared to have delivered on the present occasion, all relate to the Kingdom of CHRIST,—that is, to His Church. The first parable, (that of "the Sower,") foretells the obstacles which it would meet with;—and which continue, to this day, to oppose its growth and progress. The next,—the Parable of "the Tares," is a prophecy of the appearance which the Visible Church would present to the eyes of men;—a melancholy prophecy, attested and confirmed by every day's experience. These two parables are fully explained by our LORD. The gradation between them is obvious. One, describes how it would fare with the first planting of the Kingdom: the other, how it would fare with that Kingdom in its growth and increase.

So far, then, it had been shown that only a fourth part of the seed might be expected to prosper; while *that* fourth part would spring up mixed with tares: a dreary picture truly, for those labourers whom the LORD of the Harvest was about to send forth into His Harvest!⁽ⁿ⁾ Another side of the truth is therefore next displayed for their encouragement. Our SAVIOUR proceeds to deliver three briefer Parables; the first of which,—(peculiar to St. Mark's Gospel,) ^(o)—describes the secret and gradual growth of the Church; the next, its mighty increase; the third, its transforming power. Its victory over all the powers of evil is thus set forth, together with its final triumph.

It is sufficiently remarkable that the growth of seeds should supply the materials for four out of these five parables.

Three parables yet remain to be noticed. The first two set forth the great preciousness of CHRIST's Kingdom: but while one, (the parable of "the hid Treasure,") chiefly reminds us that in the World, the Church is *hidden*,—the other, (*that* of "the Pearl,") sets forth chiefly, its singular Beauty and surpassing Worth.

The Obstacles, and the mixed aspect of the Church having been thus prophetically shadowed forth: its secret growth,—its mighty increase,—and its transforming power: its hidden character, and its outward Beauty:—last comes a prophecy of its wide embrace; and a sketch of what will "be at the end of the World." The parable of "the Drag-net," (which is the eighth and last,) discloses the concluding scene of the Church's History: the severance of "the wicked from among the just," at the Last Day.

(m) Acts xv. 13, and xxi. 18.

(n) St. Matthew ix. 38.

(o) St. Mark iv. 26 to 29.

THE PRAYER.

O LORD JESUS CHRIST, who at Thy first coming didst send Thy Messenger to prepare Thy way before Thee; Grant that the ministers and stewards of Thy mysteries may likewise so prepare and make ready Thy way, by turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, that at Thy second coming to judge the World, we may be found an acceptable people in Thy sight, who livest and reignest with the FATHER and the HOLY SPIRIT, ever one GOD, World without end. Amen.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *Herod's opinion of CHRIST.* 3 *Wherefore John Baptist was beheaded.* 13 *JESUS departeth into a desert place: 15 where He feedeth five thousand men with five loaves and two fishes: 22 He walketh on the sea to His Disciples: 34 and landing at Gennesaret, healeth the sick by the touch of the hem of His garment.*

1, 2 AT that time Herod the tetrarch heard of the fame of JESUS, and said unto his servants, This is John the Baptist; he is risen from the dead; and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

At the "time" alluded to, our SAVIOUR was performing His third great Ministerial Circuit of Galilee; and the fame of His Miracles is found to have reached the ears of the Tetrarch. Herod had very recently been guilty of the murder of St. John Baptist,—under circumstances which the Evangelist proceeds to relate, but which will be found more fully given in St. Mark's Gospel, chap. vi. 17 to 29. That one who professed to disbelieve in the Resurrection, and the wonders of the unseen World, (a) should have been suddenly betrayed into the opinion here recorded, will be felt to be a most remarkable and instructive circumstance. Herod confesses even that the body which is "sown in weakness" is to be "raised in power;" (b) for John Baptist, who in his life-time did no miracles, (c) is yet supposed by him to be the author of all "the mighty works" which CHRIST Himself performed.

3, 4 For Herod had laid hold on John, and bound him, and put *him* in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife. For John said unto him, It is not lawful for thee to have her.

Elias rebukes Herod and Herodias with the same authority which he had formerly exerted over Ahab and Jezebel. (d) St. Mark relates that Herodias "had a quarrel" against John Baptist in consequence, and would have slain him; but that her paramour protected the stern preacher, and preserved his life. (e) It would seem from what follows that there came a day when he would have complied with her wishes had he dared; but was deterred from doing so by prudential considerations.

5, 6 And when he would have put him to death, he feared the multitude, because they counted him as a prophet. But when Herod's birthday was kept, the daughter of Herodias danced before them, and pleased Herod:

"Before *them*:"—that is, before Herod's "lords, high Captains, and chief estates of Galilee," to whom the Tetrarch had "made a Supper,"—as St. Mark relates. (f) To dance before such a company was an unmaidenly act; and must have been regarded by all present as immodest,—even as immoral.

A very ancient English Writer, after pointing out that only two such celebrations of a birthday are recorded in Scripture, (*that* namely, of Pharaoh, and the

(a) Herod was a Sadducee. Compare St. Matth. xvi. 6, with St. Mark viii. 15.

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 43.

(c) St. John x. 41.

(d) 1 Kings xxi.

(e) St. Mark vi. 20.—where see the note.

(f) St. Mark vi. 21.

present instance,) and further, that *either* was made an occasion of bloodshed, (*g*)—suggests that men ought rather to observe the day of their Birth with chaste and sober joy, than with feasting and luxury.

7, 8 whereupon he promised with an oath to give her whatsoever she would ask. And she, being before instructed of her mother, said, Give me here John Baptist's head in a charger.

This does not mean that Salome (the daughter,) had been instructed *beforehand* by Herodias; for that wicked woman cannot have foreseen the infatuation of her paramour. The Evangelist does but intend to say that before the maiden exacted of the King the fulfilment of his promise, "she went forth, and said unto her Mother, What shall I ask?"—as St. Mark, (*h*) writing afterwards, will be found in this place to explain. The Reader is requested to refer to the note on the passage of St. Mark last cited, where some remarks are offered on the conduct of Herodias, which cannot be here repeated.

9 And the King was sorry: nevertheless for the oath's sake, and them which sat with him at meat, he commanded *it* to be given *her*.

See the note on St. Mark vi. 26.

10 And he sent, and beheaded John in the prison.

This then was the end of the greatest who had ever been born of a woman! Imprisoned at the end of a Ministry of a single year's duration, in order to gratify the malice of a lustful woman: murdered, after two years of confinement, at the bidding of a dancing girl! Such are the instruments by which ALMIGHTY God does not disdain to work out the wondrous ends of His Providence! An old writer remarks,—“Let each infer from this what *they* shall suffer, whom He rejects; if He allows such a fate to befall those whom He loves.”

11, 12 And his head was brought in a charger, and given to the damsel: and she brought *it* to her mother. And His disciples came, and took up the body, and buried it, and went and told JESUS.

They found Him at Capernaum. He had, in fact, now returned from one of His great Ministerial Journeys: His Apostles also, from theirs,—the first which they had taken alone. At Capernaum they all met. It was the Spring of the year,—just twelve months before the Crucifixion. (*i*)

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark vi. 28, 29, 30, for several additional remarks.

13 When JESUS heard *of it*, He departed thence by ship into a desert place apart: and when the people had heard *thereof*, they followed Him on foot out of the cities.

St. Matthew seems to connect our Lord's crossing the Lake with the dismal tidings brought Him by the Disciples of John. The two later Gospels convey a somewhat different notion of the transaction. See St. Mark vi. 30, 31, 32, and the notes there; also, St. Luke ix. 10. The little vessel had now reached the Western side of the Sea of Galilee:

14 And JESUS went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and He healed their sick.

The Reader is again referred to the later Gospel. In the note on St. Mark vi. 34 some remarks will be found on the glorious picture of Ministerial zeal here exhibited.

(*g*) Genesis xl. 20 to 22.

(*i*) See St. John vi. 4, and the note there.

(*h*) Chap. vi. 21.

15, 16, 17 And when it was evening, His Disciples came to Him, saying, This is a desert place, and the time is now past; send the multitude away, that they may go into the villages, and buy themselves victuals. But JESUS said unto them, They need not depart; give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, We have here but five loaves, and two fishes.

All this will be found exhibited, with many beautiful differences, in St. John's Gospel,—chap. vi. 5 to 9; where the Reader is requested to read the notes . . . Consider how magnificently many of the events recorded concerning our Blessed SAVIOUR cast their shadows far back into the past! Fifteen hundred years before the present transaction, Moses had said,—“The people, among whom I am, are six hundred thousand footmen; and Thou hast said, I will give them flesh, that they may eat a whole month. Shall the flocks and the herds be slain for them, to suffice them? or shall all the fish of the sea be gathered together for them?”^(k) . . . Seven centuries more elapse, and Elisha delivers a similar injunction to his Servitor,—“Give unto the people, that they may eat.” To which, the other makes answer,—“What, should I set this,” (meaning twenty loaves of barley,) before an hundred men?”^(l)

For some observations on the 15th and 16th verses, the Reader is referred to the Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel,—chap. vi. 36, 37, 38. The Beloved Disciple proceeds,—“And JESUS said, Make the men sit down.”^(m) From the present Gospel we learn that He prefaced that command by another:

18 He said, Bring them hither to Me.

This command was preliminary to an act concerning which a few words will be found offered in the notes on St. Luke ix. 16.

19 And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the grass,

“On the *green* grass,” says St. Mark; ⁽ⁿ⁾ and St. John observes that “there was much grass in the place.”^(o)

St. Mark^(p) and St. Luke^(q) relate that they were distributed about “by companies,”—as the several Churches of the World are: yet, all *one* great company;—partakers all, of one and the same heavenly food,—all ministered to by the same Apostles,—all bound by the same tie to the same Divine Master!

and took the five loaves, and the two fishes, and looking up to Heaven, He blessed, and brake, and gave the loaves to *His* Disciples, and the Disciples to the multitude.

Impressed by the Hands of the CREATOR with a new property of growth and increase, the five barley loaves and two small fishes, when restored to the appointed instruments and channels of the Divine Bounty, were found to grow in their hands in exact proportion to the necessities of the multitude.^(r) A portion of the bread was no sooner broken off for distribution, than it became instantly replaced by a marvellous increase in the same part; and this went on, till the needs of all that vast assembly had been supplied. As it follows,—

20 And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the fragments that remained twelve baskets full.

“And of the fishes,”—as St. Mark adds, (chap. vi. 43, where see the note.) . . . So that the quantity of bread which remained after the meal, far exceeded the original supply! “An apt symbol, this,” (says a living Writer,) “of the Love which

(k) 2 Numbers xi. 21, 22.

(l) 2 Kings iv. 42, 43.

(m) St. John vi. 10.

(n) St. Mark vi. 39: where see the note.

(o) St. John vi. 10.

(p) St. Mark vi. 39.

(q) Luke ix. 14.

(r) See the latter part of the note on St. John vi. 11.

exhausts not itself by loving; but, after all its outgoings upon others, itself abides far richer than it would have done but for these. Such a multiplying there ever is in a true dispensing."—Bishop Sanderson has a remark to the same effect,—quoted in the note upon St. Mark vi. 43: and Archbishop Sandys says,—“So it is with all the graces and gifts of God. They grow in the hands of him that spendeth; and in the coffers of him that saveth, they waste.”

Several additional suggestions on this mysterious transaction, (for it is doubtless as full of mystery as of marvel,) will be found in the note on St. John vi. 13. The Reader is also referred to the Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel for some observations on the present verse, which is almost repeated by St. Luke in chap. ix. 17.

21 And they that had eaten were about five thousand men, besides women and children.

So that the number of those who partook of His Royal Bounty will have amounted, in all, nearer to *ten* thousand than to *five*. See more in the note on St. John vi. 10; as well as on St. Mark vi. 44.

22 And straightway JESUS constrained His Disciples to get into a ship, and to go before Him unto the other side, while He sent the multitudes away.

To “send the multitudes away” was evidently more than a mere dismissal, as our LORD conducted it. There appears to have been some solemnity attaching to the act,—whether in the way of Prayer or Benediction. The Disciples are found to have been unwilling to leave their Divine Master on this occasion, as will be found remarked elsewhere.^(q) One reason why He constrained them to depart is supplied by the history of the present transaction, as given by St. John; from whose account it is gathered that our LORD must have already detected a growing disposition on the part of the multitude “to make Him a King.”^(r) Very unequal to such a trial of their meekness and humility must the ardent followers of MESSIAH, at this time, have proved: filled as they are known to have been, till a much later period, with hopes of an earthly Kingdom and a temporal Prince.

23 And when He had sent the multitudes away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray: and when the evening was come, He was there alone.

The Reader is referred to some remarks which have been already offered on this place of Scripture, in the notes on St. Mark vi. 46, 47.

24 But the ship was now in the midst of the sea, tossed with waves: for the wind was contrary.

The last time *that* little vessel had been similarly endangered, its inmates had been blessed by the visible presence of their LORD. Thus had he trained them for the severer trial which now awaited them.

And here it would be wrong to overlook the rare example of strenuous obedience set us by these holy men. Neither the fruitlessness of the task in which they were engaged, (for they had been all night rowing four or five miles:)^(s) nor the terrors of the storm, (which were evidently great:)^(t) nor the severe labor in which they were actually engaged, (for “He saw them *toiling* in rowing:”)^(u) nor yet their strong desire to be with CHRIST, (for He had “constrained His Disciples to get into the ship,”)—none of these things induced them to disobey His order that they should “go before Him unto the other side.”

25 And in the fourth watch of the night JESUS went unto them, walking on the sea.

(q) See the note on St. Mark vi. 45.

(r) St. John vi. 19.

(s) St. John vi. 15.

(t) St. Mark vi. 48

It was now between three and six o'clock in the morning. Thus had our LORD by distress and danger inspired His Apostles with a more eager desire for His presence; while doubtless the events of the past day were brought before their memory in the liveliest manner by their sense of desertion, and consciousness of present need. "He cometh unto them," (St. Mark says,) "walking upon the sea; and would have passed by them." See St. Mark vi. 48, and the notes there.

26 And when the Disciples saw Him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.

For it is ever thus. The trial increases, when it is about to be altogether removed: the conflict grows hotter, as it draws towards a close: the Night is darkest immediately before the dawn. When Calamity seems to have reached the lowest ebb, then is Relief ever most near at hand Consider, that it was not till "Abraham stretched forth his hand, and took the knife to slay his son," (u) that "the Angel of the LORD called unto him out of Heaven." Then, and not before, was the ram discovered, "caught in a thicket by his horns;"—not till then did God, "because He could swear by no greater, swear by Himself, saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee!" (x) "The water was spent in the bottle,"—the child had been cast "under one of the shrubs,"—Hagar had sat down expecting the death of the child,—had lifted up her voice and wept: (y) all this had happened, ere the reprieve came forth from God Consider, above all, the history which is recalled by such passages as the following:—St. John xx. 11 to 17: St. Luke xxiv. 36 to 43.

The Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark i. 14, for a remark which applies equally to the present occasion.

27 But straightway JESUS spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.

And so, doubtless, He speaks to all whom He visits with affliction, and severe trials of their Faith. Under bereavement, and every other calamity,—"It is I," He says: "be not afraid."

The miracle which follows is peculiar to the present Gospel. St. Mark passes it over in silence, (z) for a reason already suggested in the note prefixed to his Gospel.

28 And Peter answered Him and said, LORD, if it be Thou, bid me come unto Thee on the water.

This was, virtually, a glorious acknowledgment of our LORD's Divine Power and Godhead. He knew that CHRIST could, if He pleased, suspend the Laws of Nature, and make the unsteady waves stable as a rock beneath his feet. Accordingly, he claimed such a confirmation of the words, "It is I," as only CHRIST could furnish. Yet was the request made in no vain-glorious spirit, but in love. His request is not that He may be enabled to walk upon the waves: his prayer to CHRIST is, "*Bid me come unto Thee.*"

And such a desire to be with CHRIST, St. Peter often displayed. He professed his readiness to go with Him, "both into prison, and to death." (a) He followed Him into the High-Priest's Palace. (b) Into the Sepulchre he hastened, while St. John reverently halted at the entrance: (c) and he cast himself into the sea, to come to his LORD, when he beheld Him standing on the shore of the Lake, after His Resurrection. (d)

29 And He said, Come.

"If Thou be the Son of God," (said the Tempter,) "command that these stones be made bread!" (e) "If Thou be the Son of God," (exclaimed the blaspheming

(u) Gen. xxii. 10.

(y) Gen. xxi. 15 to 17.

(b) St. Matt. xxvi. 58: St. Mark xiv. 54: St. Luke xxii. 54: St. John xviii. 16.

(c) St. John xx. 6, &c.

(x) Compare Hebrews vi. 13, with Gen. xxii. 16, 17.

(z) St. Mark vi. 50, 51.

(a) St. Luke xxii. 33.

(d) St. John xxi. 7.

(e) St. Matthew iv. 3.

Jews,) "come down from the cross!" (*f*) "If Thou be CHRIST," (cried the malefactor who was crucified with Him,) "save Thyself and us!" (*g*) "LORD, if it be Thou," (answered Peter,) "bid me come unto Thee." All four required a sign: all four chose what the sign should be: but the first three, asked in Unbelief,—the last, asked in Faith. The words were similar in every instance: but the spirit in which they were spoken was wholly different: whence it happened that silence or a rebuke followed in the case of *those*,—a gracious invitation, in the case of St. Peter. And this recalls a remark which was offered on St. Luke i. 20.

And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to JESUS.

O Marvel! the first and the last of mortal men who was ever permitted to do the like! He descended the ship's side in perfect faith. He planted his foot on the reeling billow as if it had been a rock,—and it sustained him! So literally true proved those words of our SAVIOUR CHRIST,—“He that believeth on Me, the works that I do shall he do also!” (*h*)

The ancients often remind us of the importance of miracles like this, not only “for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction,” (*i*) to the early Church, but for confirming the Faith of the Apostles themselves. If Peter,—one of their number,—may walk upon the water at God's bidding, they need entertain no doubt that CHRIST Himself is “very man,” because they see Him crossing the Lake as if it had been “a sea of glass like unto crystal.” (*k*)

30 But when he saw the winds boisterous, he was afraid: and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, LORD, save me.

Compare the forwardness of the same Peter, at a subsequent period, to profess readiness to follow CHRIST; yet failing and falling away in the hour of severest trial. (*l*) Then, it was by a *look* that CHRIST saved him. (*m*) On *this* occasion, we find that He sustained His Disciple with His Hand.

31 And immediately JESUS stretched forth *His* hand, and caught him, and said unto him, O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?

Observe, that our SAVIOUR rebukes not the waves, nor the wind,—but *him*: and yet, not *him* for “coming,”—but for “doubting.” Moreover, the doubt is now passed: (“Wherefore *didst* thou doubt?”) Already does Peter stand firmly upon the water!

The act, and the occasion of it, find a striking parallel in what occurred with respect to the Storm on the Lake. See St. Matthew viii. 26, and the note there. As long as Peter had Faith, he was secure: when he began to doubt, he began to sink;—and but for the out-stretched Hand, and sustaining Arm of CHRIST, he would have perished. Hence the Church bids us pray evermore that in all the “dangers and adversities” which may befall us while passing “the waves of this troublesome world,” the Almighty and Everlasting One would “stretch forth *His Right Hand* to help and defend us.” (*n*)

“But,” (remarks an ancient Archbishop,) “as the Mother bears on her wings, and brings back to the nest her chick which has left the nest before its time, and has fallen, so did CHRIST.” . . . “When I said, My foot slippeth: Thy mercy, O LORD, held me up!” (*o*)

32 And when they were come into the ship the wind ceased.

“*The Wind*,”—which had so terrified St. Peter, (see verse 30,) as to cause his faith to fail. *This* time, instead of silencing the storm, our SAVIOUR taught St.

(*f*) St. Matthew xxvii. 40.

(*g*) St. Luke xxiii. 39.

(*h*) St. John xiv. 12.

(*i*) 2 Tim. iii. 16.

(*k*) Rev. iv. 6.

(*l*) St. Luke xxii. 33; St. John xiii. 37.

(*m*) St. Luke xxii. 61.

(*n*) Collect for the Third Sunday after Epiphany. Compare the Collect for the Third Sunday in Lent.

(*o*) Ps. xciv. 18.

Peter,—and thereby, the rest of the Apostles,—that their safety depended upon being *with Him*. Till He had re-entered the ship, the storm ceased not.

33 Then they that were in the ship came and worshipped Him, saying, Of a truth Thou art the SON of GOD.

They seem to have had a faint perception of the Divine Nature of Him with whom they had to do;(*p*)—"who treadeth upon the waves."(*q*) "Thou art the SON of GOD!"—for "Thy way is in the sea, and Thy path in the great waters, and thy footsteps are not known."(*r*)

The ancient writers abound in beautiful remarks on this miracle. "In St. Peter," (says one,) "are figured both the strong and the weak: the strong, in that he walked upon the water: the weak, in that he doubted. Dost thou love God? Thou walkest on the sea. Dost thou love the world? It swallows thee up."(*s*)

"We need not wonder," (remarks another,) "that the wind ceased when the LORD had entered into the boat; for, in whatsoever heart the LORD is present by grace, there all wars cease."(*t*)—A third says,—“By this entrance of CHRIST into the boat, and the calm of the wind and the sea thereupon, is pointed out the eternal peace of the Church; and *that* rest which shall be, after His future return in glory. Rightly do the Disciples cry out in wonder, “Truly Thou art the SON of GOD;” for *then* shall He be confessed openly by all, in whom, now, some do not believe.”(*u*)—“It is here conveyed to us,” (writes the Great Father of the West,) “that His Glory will then be made manifest; seeing that now, they who walk by faith, see it only in a figure.”

34 And when they were gone over, they came into the land of Genesaret.

This was the name of the district west of the Lake, where Capernaum,—in the direction of which city our LORD had directed His Apostles to proceed,(*x*)—stood.

35 And when the men of that place had knowledge of Him, they sent out into all that country round about, and brought unto Him all that were diseased:

St. Mark says, that “*they ran* through that whole region round about; and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was.” “Afflictions,” (remarks an English bishop,) “like goads in our sides, troublesome as they are, yet serve to quicken us in our work, and make us mend our pace to Heaven,”(*y*)—The Evangelist proceeds, “and whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets:”(*z*)

36 and besought Him that they might only touch the hem of His garment: and as many as touched were made perfectly whole.

Doubt not that the people of those parts had learned from the Woman who had been afflicted with a bloody issue, that healing virtue flowed abundantly from the very robes of CHRIST!

But a higher subject for meditation is supplied by a comparison of this place with what is prophetically said of CHRIST's garments, in the 8th verse of 45th Psalm. In explanation of which passage, Bishop Horsley remarks,—“The High-priest of the Jews was not sprinkled with a few scanty drops of the perfume of the Sanctuary; but his person was so bedewed with it, that it literally ran down from his beard to the skirts of his garments.”(*a*) The High-priest of the Jews, in his robes of office, was in this, and in every circumstance, the living type of our Great High-Priest? . . . the perfumed garments being typical,—first, of the graces and

(*p*) For the difference between this Confession of Faith, and that other famous Confession recorded of St. Peter, see the note on St. Matt. xvi. 16.

(*r*) Ps. lxxvii. 19.

(*s*) Augustine.

(*t*) Rabanus.

(*q*) Job ix. 8.

(*u*) Hilary.

(*x*) St. Mark vi. 45: St. John vi. 17. See also ver. 22.

(*y*) Bp. Hopkins.

(*z*) St. Mark vi. 55, 56.

(*a*) Ps. cxxxiii. 2.

virtues of the Redeemer Himself in His human character ; secondly, of whatever is refreshing, encouraging, consoling and cheering in the external ministration of the Word, and thirdly, of the internal comforts of the HOLY SPIRIT."

THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, mercifully look upon our infirmities, and in all our dangers and necessities stretch forth Thy right hand to help and defend us; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER XV.

3 CHRIST reproveth the Scribes and Pharisees for transgressing God's Commandments through their own Traditions: 11 teacheth how that which goeth into the mouth doth not defile a man. 21 He healeth the Daughter of the Woman of Canaan, 30 and other great multitudes: 32 and with seven loaves and a few little fishes feedeth four thousand men, beside women and children.

1, 2 THEN came to JESUS Scribes and Pharisees, which were of Jerusalem, saying, Why do Thy Disciples transgress the Tradition of the Elders? for they Wash not their hands when they eat bread.

These two verses should be compared with the first eight of St. Mark vii.—where they will be found expounded in a very interesting manner.

“The fame of JESUS had now become so great as to attract the particular notice of the most learned men of the nation, the Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem; who appear to have thought it worth while to come down from thence into Galilee, to watch His proceedings.” Take notice that in reply to the inquiry of these Hypocrites why the Disciples transgressed the Tradition of the Elders,—our LORD demands of them why, by that very Tradition of theirs, *themselves* transgressed the Commandment of GOD; guarded as it was by that awful injunction,—“Ye shall not add unto the Word which I command you, neither shall ye diminish aught from it.”(a) As it follows,—

3, 4 But He answered and said unto them, Why do ye also transgress the Commandment of GOD by your Tradition? For GOD commanded, saying, Honour thy Father and Mother: and, He that curseth Father or Mother, let him die the death.

The former of these two places of Scripture will be found in Exodus xx. 12 and Deut. v. 16: the latter, in Exodus xxi. 17 and Levit. xx. 9.

5, 6 But ye say, Whosoever shall say to *his* Father or *his* Mother, *It is a gift*, by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me: and honour not his Father or his Mother, *he shall be free*. Thus have ye made the Commandment of GOD of none effect by your Tradition.

Rather,—“But ye say, If any one says to his Father or to his Mother, the thing whereby I might have benefited you is an Offering [dedicated to God,—he is bound to keep his vow:] and need not honour his Father or his Mother.” For an explanation of this, the reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark vii. 13.

7, 8, 9 Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto Me with their mouth, and honoureth Me with *their* lips; but their heart is far from Me. But in vain they do worship Me, teaching for Doctrines the Commandments of men.

(a) Deut. iv. 2: with which compare Deut. xii. 32; and see Rev. xxii. 18.

The quotation is from Isaiah xxix. 13; and the surprising discovery is made that these words, spoken more than seven hundred years before, had a prophetic application to the Jews of our SAVIOUR'S Day, no less than to the men who lived in the time of the Prophet. As it is said in verse 7,—“Well did Esaias prophesy of you.”

10 And He called the multitude, and said unto them, Hear, and understand:

He turns away from the stiff-necked Scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, whom He had put to silence: and calls the multitude to Him,—arousing their attention to the Doctrine which He was about to deliver, with the words,—“Hear and understand:”—

11 Not that which goeth into the mouth defileth a man; but that which cometh out of the mouth, this defileth a man.

The truth which He here so briefly delivered, will be found expanded in verses 17 to 20: concerning which, see the notes on St. Mark vii. 16.

12 Then came His Disciples, and said unto Him, Knowest Thou that the Pharisees were offended, after they heard this saying?

Consider the note on verse 10.—For the “offence” which our LORD’S words were to the Pharisees, see what has been said on St. Matth. xi. 6.

13 But He answered and said, Every plant, which My heavenly FATHER hath not planted, shall be rooted up.

The reference is to *Doctrine*,—which is often spoken of in Scripture under a similar image: as in the Parable of the Sower. “What He intends, then, by a plant not planted of His FATHER,” says an ancient Archbishop, “is, *that Tradition of men*, under cover of which the Law had been transgressed.”

14 Let them alone: they be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch.

15 Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Declare unto us this Parable.

16, 17, 18, 19 And JESUS said, Are ye also yet without understanding? Do not ye yet understand that whatsoever entereth in at the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those things which proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart; and they defile the man. For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies:

Which enumeration will be perceived, in at least five particulars, to follow the order of the Commandments of the Second Table. Some remarks will be found in the note on St. Mark vii. 21 and 22, on this instructive passage.

20 these are *the things* which defile a man: but to eat with unwashed hands defileth not a man.

This weighty Discourse ended, an incident of the most affecting beauty and interest follows:—

21, 22, 23 Then JESUS went thence, and departed into the coasts of Tyre and Sidon. And, behold, a woman of Canaan came out of the same coasts, and cried unto Him, saying, Have mercy on me, O LORD, *Thou* Son of David; my daughter is grievously vexed with a devil. But he answered her not a word.

"A woman of Canaan!"—so that there were even yet lingering in the land, (*The Land of Canaan*;) (*b*) traces of its occupants in the days of Abraham. (*c*) This woman was also living within the territory of the ancient people; for "the border of the Canaanites was from Sidon," (*d*)—which City was mentioned in ver. 21; and she "came out of the same coasts." It had been commanded the Israelites, in the days of Moses, indeed,—“Of the Cities of these people, which the Lord thy God doth give thee for an inheritance, thou shalt save alive nothing that breatheth;” (*e*)—but they disobeyed God. (*f*) “And it came to pass, when Israel was strong, they put the Canaanites to tribute, and did not utterly drive them out. . . . Neither did Asher drive out the inhabitants of . . . Sidon; . . . but the Asherites dwelt among the Canaanites, the inhabitants of the Land, for they did not drive them out.” (*g*)—In St. Mark's Gospel, (*h*) this woman is called “a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation.” Her passionate cry to the *Son of David*, by the way, is not there recorded, but only what took place in the House; whether our SAVIOUR betook Himself, partly, as it would seem, in order to escape this Woman's importunity.

Take notice how the Mother, asking Health for her Child, feels that she is asking a favour for herself:—“Have mercy,” she says, “on me.” And so, lower down, in verse 25. With which saying of hers, compare the language of the Father of the lunatic child, in St. Mark ix. 22.

“Strange!” (remarks a good man,) “that a miserable suppliant should cry and sue, while the God of Mercy is speechless. What! Is the fountain of Mercy dried up? We have often found cause to wonder at the SAVIOUR's words; but never till now at His silence.”

And his Disciples came and besought Him, saying, Send her away; for she crieth after us.

What they meant by “Send her away,”—was “Grant her her petition:” whence it follows,—

24 But He answered and said, I am not sent but unto the lost sheep of the House of Israel.

In strict conformity with which declaration, He had commanded the Twelve,—“Go not into the way of the Gentiles; . . . but go rather to the *lost sheep of the House of Israel*.” (*i*) Our LORD had probably not overstepped the confines of the Holy Land, but had come into “the coasts,” or “borders,” of Tyre and Sidon; and this Woman had come “out of the same coasts,” to the place where He was.

Concerning delayed answers to Prayer, the Reader is referred to what has been written on St. Matthew vii. 8. The line of conduct pursued by our LORD towards this poor suppliant is doubtless meant to be full of Heavenly teaching to ourselves. Take notice, then, how He is pleased to try her Faith; and, for a season, to “make as though He heard not!” (*k*)

25 Then came she and worshipped Him, saying, LORD, help me.

The scene, as already hinted (at the end of the note on verse 22,)—and as more fully explained in the note on St. Mark vii. 26,—is no longer the road-side; but is here changed to the interior of the House whither our LORD had withdrawn. Take notice how this pious creature perseveres in the language of her former petition: “LORD, help me.” It is, (says an ancient Writer,) “because the affliction of the Daughter is the affliction of the Mother.”

26 But He answered and said, It is not meet to take the children's bread, and to cast it to dogs.

Now, He answers: for “He speaks to us when we worship,”—silent till then, as though He heard not.

So, she cries loudly after Him, (ver. 22,) and He makes no reply. The Disciples

(*b*) Numbers xxxiv. 2.

(*c*) See Genesis xii. 6, and xiii. 7.

(*d*) Gen. x. 19.

(*e*) Deut. xx. 16.

(*f*) See Psalm cvi. 34 to 41.

(*g*) Judges i. 28, 31, 32. Compare Joshua xvii. 12, 13; also xvi. 10.

(*h*) St. Mark vii. 26,—where see the note.

(*i*) St. Matthew x. 6.

(*k*) Ps. xxviii. 1.

intercede for her, (ver. 24,) and they are refused. She petitions for herself, (ver. 25,) and she meets with a repulse. Yet, in spite of all, she perseveres! As it follows,—

27 And she said, Truth, LORD: yet the dogs eat of the crumbs which fall from their Master's table.

Her reply is as bold as it is beautiful. She retorts upon her LORD;—wielding against Him, in her loving earnestness, the very weapon which was to have overcome her: entangling Him in His own language, by proving that the image which He had employed, made unanswerably in favour of her suit. She seems to say, with the patriarch of old,—“I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless me!”^(l) And forget not that she *wrestled with the self-same Person*; even with the eternal SON: that Jacob, no less than the Woman of Canaan, “wept and made supplication unto Him.”^(m)

See more in the note on St. Mark vii. 28. “Learn also, hence, that CHRIST puts the strongest Faith of His own children upon the severest trials. The Trial had never been so sharp, if her Faith had not been so strong. Usually, where God gives much grace, He tries grace much.” . . . “For,” (as it is written,) “unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more.”⁽ⁿ⁾

28 Then JESUS answered and said unto her, O woman, great is thy Faith:

“Great is thy Importunity,”—some would have said: others,—“Great is thy Humility.” But our SAVIOUR says, “Great is thy *Faith*.” He sees the root: we the branches. The Reader is referred to the last note on St. Luke vii.

A pious writer points out that she does as our SAVIOUR CHRIST did, when He wrought out our Salvation with “prayers and supplications with strong crying and tears.”^(o) “and now, beholding Himself, as it were, in this woman, and seeing though not the same, yet like the fervour and perseverance as His, He approves it, as a piece of His own coin, and sets His impress upon it.

be it unto thee even as thou wilt. And her Daughter was made whole from that very hour.

“Learn hence, that nothing is so pleasing unto CHRIST, as to see His people following Him with Faith and Importunity, when he seems to withdraw from them.”

“We may observe that we have *three* ascending degrees of Faith, manifesting itself in the breaking through of hinderances, which would keep from CHRIST: in the Paralytic,^(p)—the Blind men at Jericho,^(q)—and this Woman of Canaan. The Paralytic broke through the outward hinderance of things merely external: blind Bartimeus through the hinderance opposed by his fellow men: and this woman, more heroically than all, through apparent hinderance even from CHRIST Himself. These, in their seeming weakness, were the three mighty ones, not of David, but of David's Son: who broke through the hosts of the enemy, until they could draw living water from the Well of Salvation.”^(r) So far Mr. Trench.

Such then, is the Almightyness of Faith,—(which, as we know, can move Mountains);^(s) and, such the Almightyness of Prayer! For, (as our LORD Himself has declared,) “Every one that asketh, *receiveth*; and he that seeketh, *findeth*; and to him that knocketh, *it shall be opened*.”^(t) *Delay*, on the part of God, is no token of *Denial*. He will have us *importunate*; and hath delivered more than one parable “to this end,—that men ought always to pray, and not to faint.”^(u) See what has already been written on this subject, in the notes on St. Matthew vii. 7 and 8.

(l) Genesis xxxii. 26: concerning which mysterious wrestling take notice of what is said by the prophet Hosea xii. 3, 4.

(m) Hosea xii. 4. For it is admitted by Divines that in the form of a created Angel, it was none other than the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity who appeared to Abraham, Jacob, Moses, Manoah's wife, &c.

(p) St. Mark ii. 4.

(q) 1 Cor. xiii. 2; where St. Paul alludes to the words of CHRIST recorded in St. Matthew xvii. 20.

(r) St. Matthew vii. 8.

(s) St. Luke xviii. 1 to 8, and xi. 5 to 10.

(u) St. Luke xii. 48.

(v) St. Mark x. 48.

(o) Hebrews v. 7.

(p) 2 Sam. xxiii. 16.

For a few further remarks, see the note on St. Mark vii. 29: and observe how this idolatrous "woman of Canaan," and the Gentile Centurion, become patterns of Faith to the Children of the Kingdom! (x) Yet should it be observed that even *her* exceeding Faith procured for her no exemption from fleshly trials. The heaviest of afflictions is therefore no *proof* of the Divine displeasure. Rather let us learn what is the true office of Divine chastisement from the present History; duly noting how it may be made to "work for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory." (y)

29 And JESUS departed from thence, and came nigh unto the Sea of Galilee; and went up into a mountain, and sat down there.

Our SAVIOUR is found to have been at this time on the Eastern side of the Lake; for St. MARK says that, "departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis." (z)

30, 31 And great multitudes came unto Him, having with them *those that were* lame, blind, dumb, maimed, and many others, and cast them down at JESUS' feet; and He healed them: insomuch that the multitude wondered, when they saw the dumb to speak, the maimed to be whole, the lame to walk, and the blind to see: and they glorified the GOD of Israel.

One case of Healing which happened at this time is *specified* by St. MARK; the miraculous cure, namely, which was performed on "one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech." (a) The *unmeasured* astonishment of the people at these wondrous displays of supernatural power is also noticed by the second Evangelist.

32 Then JESUS called His Disciples *unto Him*, and said, I have compassion on the multitude, because they continue with Me now three days, and have nothing to eat:

"After two days He will revive us: *in the third day* He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight,"—says the prophet. (b) Take notice that it is "*Compassion*" which He feels towards the multitude; the same sentiment which, in the ancient Scriptures also, is so affectingly ascribed to GOD: as in Isaiah xlix. 15: Jeremiah xii. 15: Micah vii. 19. This is what He felt towards the untended sheep of His pasture, (c)—towards those who brought their sick to Him for cure, (d)—towards the Leper, (e)—towards the blind men at Jericho, (f)—towards the Demonic of Gadara (g)—and towards the widow of Nain. (h) "*Compassion*" is ascribed also, in certain of the parables, to those who represent CHRIST,—as in St. Matth. xviii. 33: in St. Luke x. 33; and in xv. 20. Whence it happens that St. Peter, exhorting Christians to the imitation of CHRIST, says,—"*Be ye all of one mind, having compassion one of another.*" (i)

and I will not send them away fasting, lest they faint in the way.

Doubtless, both miracles of feeding,—(*that* performed for the relief of the Five Thousand, and *this* for the relief of the Four,)—were typical of the Sacramental Feast, in which the True Bread is given to souls famishing in this World's Wilderness, "*lest they faint in the way!*"—See more in the notes on St. John vi. 4.

33 And His Disciples say unto Him, Whence should we have so much bread in the wilderness, as to fill so great a multitude?

On reading this, we are ready enough,—*too* ready, it may be,—to exclaim at the slowness of heart which could so soon forget how the same LORD had so recently "*spread a table for them*" in the same Wilderness. But are we not hereby re-

(x) Compare St. Matthew viii. 10, with the present place.

(y) 2 Cor. iv. 17.

(z) Hosea vi. 2.

(a) St. Mark i. 41.

(b) St. Luke vii. 13.

(c) St. Mark vii. 31.

(d) St. Matth. ix. 36.

(e) St. Matthew xx. 34.

(f) 1 St. Peter iii. 8.

(g) St. Mark vii. 32.

(h) St. Matthew xiv. 14.

(i) St. Mark v. 19.

mindcd of our own conduct in every fresh case of doubt, difficulty, and danger? Are not the former mercies forgot; and the Providence and Power, of which we have experienced so many proofs, altogether overlooked and mistrusted? It hath ever been, it will ever be, thus. "He smote the stony Rock indeed, that the water gushed out, and the streams flowed withal: but can He give bread also, or provide flesh for His people?" (k)

In the meantime, two typical passages in Old Testament History may not here be overlooked. The first will be found in Numbers xi. 22,—where Moses replies to the ALMIGHTY much in the spirit of the Apostles on the present occasion. The second occurs in 2 Kings iv. 43, where Elisha's servitor expresses perplexity at having to feed an hundred men with twenty barley loaves.

34 And JESUS saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven, and a few little fishes.

The purpose of this questioning was doubtless to awaken in the Disciples a thorough sense of their need, and to call their attention to the Miracle which He was about to perform.

"Bread" and "Fish!"—the materials of the former Miracle of feeding; and the food mentioned in St. Matthew vii. 9, and 10: St. Luke xi. 11. It was with such fare also that CHRIST received the Seven Apostles, after His Resurrection,—as St. John records in the 9th verse of his last chapter.

35, 36, 37, 38 And He commanded the multitude to sit down on the ground. And He took the seven loaves and the fishes, and gave thanks, and brake *them*, and gave to His Disciples, and the Disciples to the multitude. And they did all eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left, seven baskets full. And they that did eat were four thousand men, beside women and children.

Most of the remarks which the present wondrous narrative suggests, have been already offered in connection with the miraculous feeding of the Five Thousand; to which the foregoing History bears so striking and singular a resemblance. The Reader is therefore referred to the notes on St. Matthew xiv. 15 to 21: St. Mark vi. 35 to 44: St. Luke ix. 12 to 17: and St. John vi. 3 to 14.

Concerning the present Miracle, several additional remarks will be found in the notes on St. Mark viii. 1 to 9.

39 And He sent away the multitude, and took ship, and came into the coasts of Magdala.

Or, as it is in St. Mark's Gospel, "the parts of Dalmanutha," (l)—the district, namely, to the South of Capernaum, and therefore on the Western shore of the Lake.

The great Father of the West has an admirable remark on all that has gone before:—"Surely," he says, "it will not be out of place to suggest upon this Miracle, that if any of the Evangelists who had not given the Miracle of the Five Loaves had related this of the Seven Loaves, he would have been supposed to have contradicted the rest. But because those who have related the one, have also related the other, no one is puzzled; but it is understood at once that they were two separate Miracles. This we have pointed out, in order that whenever any thing is found done by the LORD, wherein the accounts of any two Evangelists seem irreconcilable, we may understand them as two distinct occurrences; of which *one* is related by one Evangelist, and *one* by another."

(k) Psalm lxxviii. 21.

(l) St. Mark viii. 10.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *The Pharisees require a sign.* 6 *JESUS warneth His Disciples of the leaven of the Pharisees and Sadducees.* 13 *The people's opinion of CHRIST.* 16 *And Peter's confession of Him.* 21 *JESUS foreshoweth His Death,* 23 *reproving Peter for dissuading Him from it.* 24 *And admonishing those that will follow Him, to bear the Cross.*

1 THE Pharisees also with the Sadducees came, and tempting, desired Him that He would show them a sign from Heaven.

The Pharisees and *Scribes* had already made the same demand of our LORD.^(a) Here we find the former sect conspiring with their rivals, *the Sadducees*, to ensnare the Holy One. Take notice what readiness is found in those who are opposed to each other^(b) in every thing else, to combine for an unholy purpose,—to unite in their common hostility against the Truth. Herod and Pontius Pilate are “made friends,” when the LORD of Glory is to be Crucified.^(c) The Stoics and Epicureans can unite in order to encounter St. Paul.^(d) Something similar is witnessed at the present day in the unholy alliance which is ever and anon formed against the Church of these Realms by the various sects, whether of home or foreign growth, which are (wisely) tolerated among us. Even the unbeliever is hailed as a welcome ally, when the Church of CHRIST is the object of active enmity.

Concerning the “sign from Heaven” required by these evil men, the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xii. 38, and St. Mark viii. 11. They desired to see Manna descend,^(e) or the Sun stand still,^(f) or thunder and rain appear,^(g) or fire come down from Heaven;^(h) or again, that the shadow should return backward ten degrees.⁽ⁱ⁾ But,—

2, 3 He answered and said unto them, When it is evening, ye say, *It will be fair weather*; for the sky is red: and in the morning, *It will be foul weather to-day*; for the sky is red and lowering. O ye hypocrites, ye can discern the face of the sky; but can ye not *discern* the signs of the times?

It is well remarked by a living writer,—“Our LORD calls them ‘Hypocrites,’ because they pretended a desire to be satisfied as to His being the CHRIST, while they were really determined not to acknowledge Him as such.” See what has been said on this subject in the note on the last part of St. Mark viii. 11; and on St. Mark viii. 15.

“The signs of the times,” or rather, “of the Seasons,”—clearly denote those many indications which a watchful and attentive spirit might have discovered that “the fullness of Time” had arrived, and that the Reign of MESSIAH was, at last, actually at hand. The preaching of the Baptist, (the promised Elijah,)—His own Miracles,—and the unexpected fulfillment in Himself of so many dark places of

(a) St. Matthew xii. 38.

(c) St. Luke xxiii. 12.—1 Cor. ii. 8.

(f) Joshua x. 12, 13.

(i) 2 Kings xx. 10, 11.

(d) Acts xvii. 18.

(g) 1 Sam. xii. 16 to 18.

(b) Consider Acts xxiii. 6 to 10.

(e) Exodus xvi. 4. 15.

(h) 2 Kings i. 10, 12.

Prophecy,—were perhaps the chief things to which the Blessed Speaker may be thought to have alluded. He proceeds,—

4 A wicked and adulterous generation seeketh after a sign; and there shall no sign be given unto it, but the sign of the Prophet Jonas.

“This saying, St. Matthew has already given; ^(k) whence we may store up for our information that the Lord spoke the same thing many times. Where there are contradictions, therefore, which cannot be explained, it may be understood that the same sayings were uttered on two different occasions.” So far, an ancient Father. See the note on St. Mark viii. 12.—Strange, that the sign of His Resurrection oftenest insisted upon by our Blessed Lord,—the only one to which He condescended to appeal,—had been exhibited by *the first* of the Prophets!

St. Mark introduces these sayings of our Lord, (which, however, he gives far more briefly,) with the statement that “He sighed deeply in His Spirit.” ^(l) With the deepest sorrow, we may be sure, were the words spoken. After which, it is solemnly added,—

And He left them, and departed.

That is, He embarked with His Disciples; and crossing the Northern part of the Sea of Galilee, repaired to the Eastern shore,—the scene of his two recent miracles of feeding. See the notes on St. Mark viii. 13 and 14, concerning this and the next verse.

5 And when His Disciples were come to the other side, they had forgotten to take bread.

In which statement, (remarks an ancient writer,) “it should be observed how far the Disciples were from any longing for luxuries, when they took so small care even for the very necessities of life.”

6 Then JESUS said unto them, Take heed and beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

His Human Soul was yet filled with heavy thoughts concerning the hard-hearted persons with whom He had so recently had to do. Not so the Disciples. Their hearts soared not, like His. The mention of “leaven” suggested to them nothing beyond the notion of bodily food, and anxiety concerning the scanty supply of bread with which they had set out from home.

Full of deep meaning, we may be sure, was this caution concerning “leaven” on our SAVIOUR’S lips. Consider how it had been threatened in the ancient Law, that whosoever of the people ate leavened bread at certain seasons, “*that* soul should be cut off from Israel.” ^(m) And was it not the true Israel,—the Israel of God,—to whom the language of the text was addressed? . . . See more in the note to St. Mark viii. 15.

7, 8 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have taken no bread. Which when JESUS perceived, He said unto them,

Rather,—“And Jesus, knowing it, said to them,” ⁽ⁿ⁾—

O ye of little faith, why reason ye among yourselves, because ye have brought no bread?

“They were perplexed about the meaning of their Master’s saying, and imagined that He intended by it to caution them against supplying their present want with such leavened bread as had been made by any Pharisee or Sadducee. We are told that the Jews had religious scruples about the persons from whom they got their leaven; and in particular that they would not take it from a heathen, or even a Samaritan. This may account for the mistake of the Disciples. It appears further

(k) St. Matth. xii. 39.

(l) St. Mark viii. 12.

(m) Exodus xii. 15.

(n) Concerning which words see the note on St. Mark ii. 8.

that while they thought they were cautioned against procuring bread made with the leaven of the Pharisees and the Sadducees, they were at the same time troubled as to what they should do for the want of bread :” having brought with them only one loaf.(o) So far an excellent modern Commentary(p) . . . Our Lord proceeds,—

9, 10 Do ye not yet understand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thousand, and how many baskets ye took up? neither the seven loaves of the four thousand, and how many baskets ye took up?

From St. Mark's Gospel, we discover that the Blessed Speaker paused at the end of each inquiry, and obtained from the lips of His Disciples an admission that the number of the baskets was on one occasion “Twelve,” on the other “Seven.”(q) The difference in the *kind of basket* which was employed to contain the superfluities of either meal, is marked with great exactness in the original Greek. Our SAVIOUR proceeds,—

11 How is it that ye do not understand that I spake *it* not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees?

He required at their hands that they should “understand” the deep spiritual meaning which attached to His Divine words: reproved them for taking literally the words which He had spoken in a mystical sense. See the note on St. Mark viii. 21. One of the ancients remarks,—“that you may learn what force CHRIST's reproof had upon His Disciples, and how it roused their sluggish spirit, hear what says the Evangelist:”

12 Then understood they how that He bade *them* not beware of the leaven of bread, but of the Doctrine of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.

“Yet He had not interpreted this to them,” proceeds the same Father.(r) “This instruction of our LORD, therefore, drew them away from Jewish observances, and made them attentive instead of careless, and raised them out of their little faith; that whenever they should seem to have but small provision of bread, they might have no fear about food, but might despise all such things.”

Concerning the use of the term “Leaven” in this place, and the reason of it, enough has been said in the note on St. Mark viii. 15. The spreading and transforming influence of a little leaven, gives a lively notion of the importance of attending anxiously to the beginnings, whether of good or evil, in ourselves. Men have often traced the altered complexion of a whole life to a single conversation,—sometimes to a single saying. “A little leaven,” (as the great Apostle hath *twice* remarked,) “leaveneth the whole lump.”(s) The Enemy knows this well, and therefore plies us with suggestions to commit *little* sins.

Our Blessed LORD, having wrought a wondrous miracle at Bethsaida Julias, (a different town from the Bethsaida commonly mentioned,)(t)—which miracle, St. Mark alone of all the Evangelists describes,(u)—proceeded in a Northerly direction, still keeping on to the East of the River Jordan, until we find him arriving among “the towns,” or, as St. Matthew expresses it, “the parts,” (here rendered “the coasts,”) of Cæsarea Philippi.(x) Hard by was *Dan*, which the proverbial expression “from Dan to Beersheba” indicates as the most northerly point of the Holy Land. The Reader will find more on this subject in the note on St. Mark viii. 27.

13 When JESUS came into the coasts of Cæsarea Philippi,

—“it came to pass, as He was alone, praying, His Disciples were with Him; and,”(y)—

(o) St. Mark viii. 14.

(p) St. Mark viii. 19, 20, where see the note.

(q) 1 Cor. v. 6, and Gal. v. 9.

(r) Chrysostom.

(s) St. Mark viii. 22 to 26.

(t) See the note on St. Mark viii. 21.

(u) Concerning Cæsarea Philippi, see the note on St. Mark viii. 27.

(y) St. Luke ix. 18.

He asked His Disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I, the Son of Man, am?

Concerning the title which our Blessed LORD here, and on so many other occasions assumed to Himself, the Reader is referred to what has been written in the note on St. Matthew viii. 20. . . . "Thou,—the Son of Man, and therefore Very Man,"—(it seems to be implied by the confession which followed,) "art THE SON OF THE LIVING GOD, and therefore Very GOD:" which was a full recognition of the Incarnate JEHOVAH,—the Great Mystery of the Gospel. . . . In the meantime the Apostles proceed to answer the question of their LORD:—

14 And they said, Some say that *Thou art* John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the Prophets.

The Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark viii. 28, concerning this reply.

15 He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am?

Rather,—“But *ye*, whom say ye that I am?” . . . From which two questions of our LORD, (observes an excellent writer,) (z) “it is evident that neither to the multitude, nor to the Disciples, had He declared Himself to be the CHRIST; and likewise, that the Faith which He would elicit from the Disciples was different from that held by the multitude around. He had not told them, save by that Voice of God which speaks within; and ‘by the cords of a man,’ (a) by which He drew them on to this, the very consummation and crown of all. It was for *this*, He had been with them thus long. It was for *this*, that He had chosen them; for *this*, that He had ordained them. For *this*, He had made them witnesses of so many Miracles: had explained to them His Parables; had reproved their slowness of understanding; that they might come to the knowledge of the SON OF GOD. For ‘this is Life Eternal,—that they might know Thee, the Only True God, and JESUS CHRIST, whom Thou hast sent.’” (b)

Take notice, that this inquiry is addressed to *them all*: the whole Apostolic body is questioned; and St. Peter, in making reply, answers in behalf of the rest, as he had already done, once before. (c) The Fathers point out that he speaks as the mouthpiece of the Apostles,—as their leader, (“*first*, Simon,” it is said in a certain place,) (d)—as the most ardent and forward of the Twelve.

16 And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the living GOD.

There must certainly have been something in this Confession which implied a truer recognition of the Divine Nature of CHRIST than was contained in any of those other confessions,—glorious and adequate as they may at first appear,—which are found in different parts of the Gospel: else could it never have called forth such words of special commendation. Strange to say, however, St. Peter had already (at Capernaum) professed the common Faith of himself and his fellow-Disciples in the *self-same form of words* which he here employs:—“We believe and are sure that Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of the Living GOD.” (e) The words may be the same, however, and yet the intention of the speaker may be very different, at different times: (f) and it is impossible not to suspect that it was so here. When the *form* of Confession differs, it is obvious to suspect a difference of intention. Nathaniel’s words, for instance,—“Thou art the SON of GOD; Thou art the King of Israel:” (g) the speech of the Disciples in the ship,—“Of a truth, Thou art the SON of GOD:” (h) the profession of Martha,—“I believe that Thou art the CHRIST, the SON of GOD, which should come into the world:” (i) all these may well be thought to be only nobler methods of expressing what the woman of Canaan, and the two blind men of Jericho intended, when they cried to our SAVIOUR, saying, “Have mercy on us, O LORD, Thou Son of David:” (k) language which did indeed imply that Jesus of Nazareth was, in the speaker’s opinion, the promised MESSIAH; but which was yet consistent with the belief that He was but an Earthly Deliverer, and

(z) Rev. Isaac Williams.

(e) St. John vi. 69.

(f) See the note on St. Luke i. 20.

(i) St. John xi. 27.

(a) Hosea xi. 4.

(d) St. Matthew x. 2.

(g) St. John i. 49.

(k) St. Matthew xv. 22; and xx. 31.

(b) St. John xvii. 3.

(c) St. John vi. 69.

(h) St. Matth. xiv. 33.

a Temporal Prince. In this recognition of CHRIST as "the Son of the living God," however, it seems to be implied that He was the Only-Begotten of Him with whom is "the Well of Life:"(l) concerning Whom it is emphatically declared that He "*lieth*;"(m) and therefore, (as it is said in the Creed,) that He was "God of God, Light of Light, Very God of Very God, Begotten not made, being of *one substance with the FATHER*," . . . Accordingly it follows,—

17 And JESUS answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-jona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed *it* unto thee, but My FATHER which is in Heaven.

That is, "Simon son of Jona;" as it is said in St. John i. 42: by which name also our LORD thrice addressed the same Apostle after His Resurrection.(n) It has been well remarked by one of the Ancients that there would be little meaning in this mode of address on the present occasion, unless we suppose that the Divine Speaker thereby intended to show that CHRIST is as naturally the Son of God, as Simon was the Son of Jonas; that is, of the same substance as He that begat Him.

St. Peter, like St. Paul, had "not conferred with *flesh and blood*:"(o) that is, human lips had not been his instructors in the great mystery of the Gospel; neither had the suggestions of Natural Reason guided him to the discovery of so great a truth. But he had derived his teaching directly from God Himself: and in *this* consisted his "blessedness."—Our LORD proceeds,

18 And I say unto thee, Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church:

"Known unto GOD are all His works from the beginning of the World."(p) The present hour had been accordingly foreseen by our SAVIOUR at His first interview with this, His highly favoured servant; for when JESUS first "beheld him, He said, Thou art Simon the son of Jona: *thou shalt be called Cephas*;"(q)—which, (as St. John explains,) signifies "a stone," or "Rock." In a similar way, Jacob is found to have *twice* received from God the new name of "Israel."(r)

But this memorable promise must have ran far more pointedly in the original language, than when it is translated into our own tongue. "Thou art a Rock (*Cepha*); and upon this Rock (*Cepha*) I will build My Church."—One of the ancients(s) paraphrases the place thus:—Thou hast said to Me, "Thou art the CHRIST, the Son of the living God:" therefore I say unto *thee*,—(and for Me to speak is to make it so),—"Thou art a Rock" . . . For as from CHRIST proceeded that Light to the Apostles whereby they were called "the Light of the World,"(t) so upon Simon, who believed in CHRIST the Rock,(u) was bestowed the name of Rock.—Some of the Fathers thought that CHRIST, not St. Peter, is "the Rock" here spoken of; and some, that not St. Peter, but his Confession, was the Rock on which CHRIST was to build His Church: but such meanings are forced and unnatural. The obvious interpretation of the place is the true one: namely, "Upon thee, as upon a sure foundation, I will build My spiritual House."(x) Not that we would altogether *exclude* other meanings. We know that, in a certain sense, "other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is JESUS CHRIST."(y) We know, too, that, it was the firmness of the Apostle's *Faith*,—his rock-like *Confession*, therefore,—on which our SAVIOUR CHRIST, "as a wise master-builder,"(z) proceeded to build. But all this is somewhat foreign to the question. The primary meaning of our LORD's words is the thing to be considered. . . . Let none be afraid of the consequences of such an interpretation. It might be thought to make something, indeed, for the Church of *Jerusalem*: but for the Church of *Rome*, it makes *nothing*,—nor *can* make.

Concerning the fulfilment of this great prophecy, we shall find no more trustworthy guide than our learned Bishop Pearson. "The only way" (he says,) "to attain unto the knowledge of the true notion of *the Church*, is to search the New

(l) Psalm xxxvi. 9.

(m) 2 Sam. xxii. 47; or Ps. xviii. 46. Job xix. 25. Jer. iv. 2: v. 2: xii. 16: xvi. 14, 15: xlv. 26, &c. See also Deut. v. 26. Joshua iii. 10. 1 Sam. xvii. 26, 36. Jeremiah x. 10, &c.

(n) St. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

(o) Gal. i. 16.

(p) Acts xv. 18.

(q) St. John i. 42.

(r) Gen. xxxii. 28 and xxxv. 10.

(s) Jerome.

(t) St. Matt. v. 14.

(u) 1 Cor. x. 4.

(x) Consider 1 Tim. iii. 15.

(y) 1 Cor. iii. 11.

(z) 1 Cor. iii. 10.

Testament, and from the places there which mention it, to conclude what is the nature of it. To which purpose it will be necessary to take notice, that our SAVIOUR first speaking of it, mentioneth it as that which then *was not*, but afterwards *was to be*; as when He spake unto the great Apostle, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church;' but when He had ascended into Heaven, and the HOLY GHOST had come down, when Peter" by his Sermon on the Day of Pentecost^(a) "had converted *three thousand souls*,^(b) which were added to the hundred and twenty Disciples," of which we heard before,^(c) "then there was a Church; and that, built upon Peter, according to our SAVIOUR's promise; for afterwards, we read, 'the LORD added to the Church daily such as should be saved.'" In short, on the first Christian Pentecost, ten days after the Ascension, "St. Peter took upon himself to build the Church; which he then performed when he preached the Gospel by which the Church was first gathered." Nor was it members of the *Jewish* nation only which he thus first wrought, like living stones, into the spiritual fabric of CHRIST's Church; but he was sent, by special revelation from Heaven, to preach the Gospel to Cornelius and his family also,—who were the first *Gentile* believers.^(d) . . . Thus was there "laid in Sion" that precious "Corner-stone," of which Prophecy is so full;^(e) for in Sion was the first Church built. That Church of Jerusalem was the Mother of all Churches: for to *that* Church "all others since have been in a manner added, and conjoined;"^(f) making up together that *one* "Holy Catholic Church" in which we profess to believe, and for the good estate of which we pray. A gracious promise follows:—

and the Gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.

The "gates of Hell" is a remarkable, and, at first sight, a perplexing expression; but "the gates of the Grave,"^(g) and "the Gates of Death,"^(h) are found in other parts of Scripture. The phrase, as our LORD here employs it, most likely denotes "the Infernal Powers,"—"the Enmity of the Unseen World,"—"the arts and devices of Satan:"—and He here promises that these shall not finally prevail against His Church. For "though the Providence of God doth suffer many particular Churches to cease," (as five out of those seven mentioned in the second and third chapters of the Book of Revelation,) "yet the promise of the same God will never permit, that all of them at once shall perish. When CHRIST first spake particularly to St. Peter, He sealed His speech with a powerful promise of perpetuity, saying, 'Thou art Peter, and upon this Rock I will build My Church; and the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.' When He spake generally to all the rest of the Apostles to the same purpose, ('Go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST,')⁽ⁱ⁾ He added a promise to the same effect,—'and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the World.'^(k) The first of these promises assures us of the continuance of the Church, because it is built upon a Rock;" (in conformity with what our LORD had said at the conclusion of His Sermon on the Mount, about the manner in which the Wise Man built his House:)^(l) "the latter of these promises giveth not only an assurance of the continuance of the Church, but also the cause of that continuance, which is *the presence of CHRIST*."^(m) . . . Still addressing St. Peter, our LORD continues,—

19 And I will give unto thee the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever thou shalt loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

As, in the ordination of Priests, the bishop delivers *the Bible* to every one, saying, "Take thou *authority to preach the Word of GOD*," &c., so here our LORD, when He promises to St. Peter that He will hereafter give him *the Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven, promises that He will give him *authority to bind and to loose*.

And the power of "binding and loosing" in "the Kingdom of Heaven, (that is, in the Church of CHRIST)," clearly refers to the exercise of that power which belongs of necessity to Rulers: a power, it should be well observed, which was after-

(a) Acts ii. 14 to 39.

(b) Acts ii. 41.

(c) Acts i. 15.

(d) Acts x. Note carefully Acts xv. 7.

(e) Isaiah xxviii. 16.

(f) Bp. Pearson.

(g) Isaiah xxxviii. 10.

(h) Ps. ix. 13.

(i) St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

(k) St. Matth. xxviii. 20.

(l) See the note on St. Matthew vii. 25.

(m) Bp. Pearson.

wards conveyed to the whole Apostolic body, and in the self-same words:(*n*) whence an ancient Father remarks, "All we Bishops have in St. Peter received the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven."(*o*) "When the Jewish teachers disallowed anything as being unlawful," (says an excellent modern Writer,) "they were said to 'bind' it: and when they allowed anything as lawful, they were said to 'loose' it. Our Lord therefore here assures Peter, that whatever rules he should lay down, or whatever judgment he should pass, in the exercise of his Apostolical authority, for the well ordering of the Church on Earth, should be ratified and confirmed in Heaven."(*p*) The solemn assurance conveyed at the Ordination of Priests, was of course especially implied and intended; namely, "Whose sins thou dost forgive they are forgiven; and whose sins thou dost retain, they are retained."(*q*) But, (as the great Father of the West observes,) "not Peter alone, but the whole Church, bindeth and looseth sins." Doubtless, only so is this power given that "the power of *Authority* rests with God alone,—who openeth by the pouring forth of His grace: the power of *Dignity*, with CHRIST,—who openeth through the merits of His Passion. The power of *Stewardship*, it is which rests with the Rulers of the Church,—who open through ministration of the sacraments."

Let none, therefore, suppose from this promise (observes a Latin Father,) "that the innocent may be condemned, or the guilty absolved;" for "what will be inquired into before the Lord will be, not the sentence of the priests, but the life of him that is judged. We read in Leviticus that the lepers were commanded to show themselves to the Priests; and if they *had* the leprosy, then they were made unclean by the Priest. Not *the Priest* makes them leprous and unclean, but, having knowledge of what is Leprosy, and what is not, he can discern who is clean, and who is unclean. In the same way then, as the priest makes the leper unclean, the Bishop or Presbyter binds or looses,—not those who are without sin or guilt; but, in the discharge of his function, when he has heard the varieties of their sins, he knows who is to be bound and who loosed." Thus far, Jerome.

A more remarkable question, however, here awaits us, and requires a few words. Strange as it may appear, and monstrous as the pretension obviously is, the Church of Rome, (which *certainly* was not founded by St. Peter,) rests on small portion of her claims to supremacy, and authority over the other Churches of Christendom, on these few words addressed by CHRIST to His highly-favoured Apostle. Without engaging in a controversial discussion, (which would be out of place in these pages,) it shall suffice to point out, first, that although upon St. Peter, the Rock, CHRIST declared that He would found His Church, it does not by any means follow therefrom that St. Peter was to become the *Supreme Governor* of that Church; still less does it follow that *the Bishops of Rome* have derived from him the same right of supremacy. But, in fact, the Apostles themselves, (who must needs have been the best judges of the meaning of our Lord's words,) discovered in them no such grant or promise of superior authority as is pretended: why else did they, more than once, dispute "which of themselves was the greatest?"(*r*) Why are "James, Cephas, and John"(*s*) mentioned as "pillars" of the Church, without any notice of inequality between them? Why did St. Paul "withstand St. Peter to the face, because he was to be blamed?"(*t*) and St. James, not St. Peter, give sentence at the first Council?(*u*) *Precedence in Rank* implies no degree of *superior Authority*.—Touching the first building of the Church, (as one of the oldest of the Fathers(*x*) inquires,)—"If you think the whole Church was built on Peter alone, what will you say concerning John, the son of Thunder, and concerning each of the rest of the Apostles?"—"You say," (remarks another) "that the Church is founded on Peter; but the Church is elsewhere declared to be founded on *all* the Apostles,"(*y*) alluding to that well-known place in the Epistle to the Ephesians, "Ye are built upon the foundation of the Apostles and the Prophets, JESUS CHRIST Himself being the chief corner-stone."(*z*)

But, in the next place, let it be observed that even if "the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven" *had* conferred superior authority and dominion over all the rest of Christendom; and if those Keys *had been* committed by our SAVIOUR to St. Peter exclusively;—and if St. Peter had *really* been the first Bishop of Rome:—under all

(*n*) St. Matthew xviii. 18. (*o*) Ambrose. (*p*) Archdeacon Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(*q*) The Form and Manner of Ordering Priests, in the Book of Common Prayer.

(*r*) St. Luke xxii. 24. St. Mark ix. 24.

(*s*) Gal. ii. 9.

(*t*) Gal. ii. 11.

(*u*) Acts xv. 13.

(*x*) Origen.

(*y*) Jerome.

(*z*) Ephes. ii. 20. Compare Rev. xxi. 14.

these combined suppositions, the Bishops of Rome in perpetuity would find it impossible to make out even a probability that the like awful prerogative which they claim for the great Apostle, hath descended to themselves. But, in truth, these assumptions are found to be fallacious, at every step. For, first, the Keys cannot, of course, be supposed to have conferred upon St. Peter any other powers of binding and loosing than were conferred upon the rest of the Apostles; and next, those powers were conveyed to the whole Apostolic body, even in the self-same words with which the Keys are here committed to St. Peter,—as may be seen by a reference to St. Matthew xviii. 18. Lastly, it is quite certain that St. Peter was never a Bishop of Rome at all. He is reckoned indeed by a very ancient Church writer as the Bishop of that See; but the very same writer reckons him as *the first Bishop of Antioch also*. Now, he cannot have been *both*. Irenæus, writing much earlier, (A. D. 177,) calls *Linus* the first Bishop. In fact, (as we have elsewhere pointed out,) (a) it is one of the marks of distinction between an Apostle and a Bishop, that the former was *universally charged*,—that is, had a general commission in all places, towards all persons: (b) the latter, had a *several See*.—This entire fiction of the Romanists is, in a word, the monstrous invention of a late and ambitious age. Nay; so far from admitting her vain and boastful pretensions, many will be found to inquire how a Church so corrupt and idolatrous as the Romish continues to exist at all? The answer to this question will be,—“Because she yet holds (God be praised for it!) a right Faith in respect of the great doctrine which St. Peter confessed: wherefore, even against *her* have not the Gates of Hell prevailed.”

20 Then charged He His Disciples that they should tell no man that He was JESUS the CHRIST.

After all that may be said in the way of explanation, this must be confessed to remain a very dark, and very mysterious statement. It is found that “as He had been so solicitous that the manifestation of His Divine Power should not be published by those He healed; as He had commanded the Evil Spirits not to make known His Godhead; and as, for this Confession, He had retired with His Apostles to a place so distant: so now, on their return, this great truth on which the Salvation of Mankind depended, is to be as the Treasure hid in a field; (c) or as the seed buried in the Earth;” (d) or as the Leaven hid in three measures of meal. (e)

By the words which follow, our LORD seems to have intended to banish any ambitious notions which may have sprung up in the minds of His followers at the mention of a Church to be shortly built, and a Kingdom soon to come. Expectations of worldly grandeur may well have arisen at such a time, which could not be more effectually opposed than by thus unfolding the prospect of His approaching Sufferings and Death. Accordingly,—

21 From that time forth began JESUS to show unto His Disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and Chief Priests and Scribes, and be killed, and be raised again the third day.

Thus did He lay before them the whole mystery of what was to be hereafter: a course of events for which they were little prepared, as the affectionate, yet mistaken remonstrance of St. Peter, which follows sufficiently shows.

22 Then Peter took Him, and began to rebuke Him, saying, Be it far from Thee, LORD: this shall not be unto Thee.

The Apostle, in his warmth,—his mingled love and terror,—seems to have laid his hands upon the sacred person of CHRIST, while he spoke these words. . . . “Observe how entirely he is at a loss concerning those things which had *not* been revealed to him!” remarks one of the Fathers. For it is said of our SAVIOUR,—

23 But He turned and said unto Peter, Get thee behind Me, Satan: thou art an offence unto Me: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but those that be of men.

(a) See the note on St. Luke vi. 13.
(d) St. Matt. xiii. 31.

(b) 2 Cor. xi. 28.
(e) St. Matt. xiii. 33.

(c) St. Matt. xiii. 44.

See how sternly CHRIST puts him away! "the intention," (as Bishop Sanderson points out) "be it granted never so good, is insufficient to warrant an action good, so long as it faileth either in the object, or manner, or any requisite circumstance whatever." May not the practical lesson to be derived from this incident be, that men should reject with indignation, refuse even to listen to, the suggestions of mistaken Friendship which would dissuade them from treading the pathway of Duty, if it threatens also to prove a pathway of pain?

Concerning the three foregoing verses, the Reader is requested to read what has been offered further on St. Mark viii. 31, 32, and 33. Satan, availing himself of the Apostle's ignorance, had impelled him to utter a saying, the tendency of which was to throw a stumbling-block in the way of the Son of Man. The Death and Passion of CHRIST which were to follow,—terrible, doubtless even in the remote anticipation, as they are known to have proved in the near prospect, (*f*)—were not to be objected against by the immediate Followers, and chosen Disciples of the LAMB, as unworthy of Him: or such an insinuation must be repelled, as originating with none other than the Father of Lies. To "savour the things of men," here means to have the affections set on worldly things.

How striking is it to discover that the very man who, only a moment before was named a *Rock*,—had become already a *stone of offence* in the SAVIOUR'S way! "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall!" (*g*) "It is evident that the Temptations of the Devil are most strong after God's people have discharged some extraordinary duties to God, or have received most help from God. You find that immediately after the LORD'S Supper, the Devil desired to winnow the Disciples; and he entered into *one*. After CHRIST had fasted forty days and forty nights, He was tempted of the Devil. No sooner, (as Bishop Hall observes,) was He out of the Water of Baptism, but He was in the Fire of Temptation."

24 Then said JESUS unto His Disciples,

Or, as it is in St. Mark,—“When He had called the people unto Him, with His Disciples also, He said unto them,”—(*h*)

If any *man* will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me.

One of the ancients observes,—“Because, after the Cross, we require a new strength, He adds ‘and follow Me.’” “And this,” (remarks another Father,) “is because it may happen that a man may suffer, and yet not follow CHRIST; that is, when he does not suffer for CHRIST'S sake.”

In St. Luke's Gospel, it is “take up his Cross *daily*.” (*i*) Bishop Wilson recommends that men should every day, in some small matter, practise self-denial: perform some one act, which may conform them more and more to the image of their LORD . . . See the note on St. Mark viii. 34.

25 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it.

A few remarks on the sayings contained in verses 24 and 25, will be found in the notes on St. Matthew x. 38 and 39,—to which the Reader is referred.

26 For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

“Having thus called upon His Disciples to deny themselves, and take up their Cross,” (says an old Writer,) “He filled them with terror. These severe tidings are therefore followed by more joyful:”

27 For the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of His FATHER with His Angels; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.

By which words, our LORD seems to convey the blessed assurance that “He will

(*f*) St. Matt. xxvi. 39. 42.
(*h*) St. Mark viii. 34.

(*g*) 1 Cor. x. 12.
(*i*) St. Luke ix. 23.

come hereafter with glory to recompense men abundantly for the sacrifices which He now calls upon them to make for His sake."—He says "the Glory of the FATHER," because "the FATHER hath given Him authority to execute judgment." (k)

It is to be observed moreover that this Discourse is so adjusted as to convey to the minds of the Apostles as near a view of the Truth as they were able as yet to receive. The mention of "a Church," and "the kingdom of Heaven," had awakened proud thoughts and lofty hopes: it had been accordingly followed by an outline of the Mystery of the Atonement, the circumstances of Pain and Humiliation which must first be, as the condition of Future Glory. Strangely perplexing was the picture thus presented to the eyes of the Disciples. Our Lord therefore reconciles them to it by speaking of that future coming in Glory, which they had ever been accustomed to connect in their minds with the Advent of MESSIAH. And to support them in their expectation of this event, yet so distant, He promises, (in the next verse,) an immediate, sensible manifestation, as an earnest of that glorious Coming which might not take place till the end of the World. As it follows,—

28 Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom.

This announcement will be found in the three first Gospels; (l) and on each occasion it is introduced in exactly the same way. From the close connection in which it stands with the History of the Transfiguration, which immediately follows on all three occasions, it is impossible to resist the conviction that the words themselves refer to that great event. It is here described as the "Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." St. Mark's words are—"Till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power." St. Luke says simply—"till they see the Kingdom of God." The meaning must be, that the great Dispensation which would then only be fulfilled when CHRIST should come to judge the World at the last Day,—was about at once to begin. A glorious foretaste of that His final coming, was about to be at once revealed. In the words of a learned Latin Father,—“As was His appearance on the Mount of Transfiguration, such will it be at the Day of Judgment.”

(k) St. John v. 27.

(l) See St. Mark ix. 1, and St. Luke ix. 27.

CHAPTER XVII.

1 *The Transfiguration of CHRIST.* 14 *He healeth the lunatic.* 22 *Foretelleth His own Passion,* 24 *and payeth tribute.*

It will be remembered that the preceding Chapter ended with the following remarkable prophecy:—"Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here which shall not taste of Death, till they see the Son of Man coming in His Kingdom." As already explained, these words cannot be referred to any recorded event so reasonably as to the Transfiguration of CHRIST, which is next brought before us: but the Reader must be referred on this head to what has been already offered in the notes on St. Matthew xvi. 28, and St. Luke ix. 27.

The chief events which go before must be borne distinctly in mind by him who would profit by what is to follow. It should be remembered that during the recent sojourn of our SAVIOUR and His Twelve Apostles in "the towns of Cæsarea Philippi," (a) St. Peter's splendid confession of the Divinity of the Son of Man had occurred; whereupon followed the splendid promise which was discussed at so much length in the last Chapter. Then came some remarkable predictions; and closely connected with these, (as we believe,) stands our LORD's Transfiguration. For, as He had been preparing the minds of His Followers for His own coming Humiliation, and their's also, (b) so had He supported them by an allusion to that final Advent in Glory, when He will reward the just, and in the sight of Men and Angels confess them to be His own. Yet more completely to build up His Apostles, and support their Faith, the Almighty One proceeds to give them an immediate earnest of His future glorious Advent: (c) by revealing Himself to three of their number as He is. "He took with Him three," (says an ancient Writer,) "that in the mouths of two or three witnesses every word might be established." St. Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee, (the only Disciples on whom He had bestowed a new name,) are accordingly admitted to a sight of His Glory, and to a foretaste of the brightness of His Kingdom. As it follows,—

1 And after six days, JESUS taketh Peter, James, and John his brother, and bringeth them up into an high mountain apart,

If the "high mountain" which was the scene of this mysterious transaction was Mount Tabor, (as tradition relates,) the Blessed Company will have crossed the Jordan since the concluding events of the former Chapter, and travelled into Galilee. But there is no reason for supposing that they did so: rather the reverse. (d) This event may very well have taken place on some eminence East of the Jordan, concerning which all Tradition has perished. It is quite the manner of the HOLY SPIRIT to draw a veil over places and persons,—doubtless because the carnal heart is so prone to spend itself on these, instead of looking up to Him who is above all: and accordingly, when St. Peter, in his Second Epistle, would describe what occurred on the Mount of Transfiguration, it will be observed that he simply calls it "the Holy Mount." (e) . . . Perhaps it is *better* that we should *not* know which the place was. Surely it would be too much to visit such a locality! Only three of the Apostles were deemed fit to behold the Transfiguration. Which of ourselves can be thought worthy to behold even the spot where it took place?

For some remarks on the highly favoured witnesses of the great transaction which

(a) St. Mark viii. 27. Compare St. Matth. xvi. 13.

(b) St. Matthew xvi. 21 to 25.

(c) Surely St. Peter alludes to the Transfiguration in this very point of view,—1 St. Peter v. 1.

(d) See St. Mark ix. 30.

(e) 2 St. Peter i. 18.

follows, the Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark ix. 2.—JESUS, then, bringeth His three Disciples “into an high Mountain apart,”—

2 and was transfigured before them: and His Face did shine as the Sun, and His raiment was white as the Light.”

The nature of the change which passed over His Divine Person, it is more easy to imagine than to describe: more easy to describe than to explain. The very same Being whom they had all along known,—yet marvellously altered from what He had ever seemed,—every feature, every part of His Body, had become invested with glory, and shone with dazzling lustre, which His raiment was unable to eclipse or even to obscure. St. Matthew's words in this place, recall the appearance vouchsafed by Revelation to St. John the Divine:—“His Head and His Hairs were white like wool, as white as snow; (f) and His Eyes as a flame of fire: and His Feet like unto fine brass, as if they burned in a furnace; . . . and His countenance was as the Sun shineth in his strength.” (g) “His raiment was white as the Light:” for this was He “who covereth Himself with Light as with a Garment.” (h) “His Brightness,” (says the Prophet,) “was as the Light.” (i)

3 And, behold, there appeared unto them Moses and Elias talking with Him.

“Who appeared in Glory,” (St. Luke says,) “and spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.” (k) Concerning these mighty personages, the Reader is requested to refer to the notes on St. Luke ix. 31 and St. Mark ix. 4. As their converse confirmed what our SAVIOUR had lately predicted concerning His own future sufferings, so did the Voice from Heaven which followed, confirm the great truth which St. Peter had lately proclaimed in his glorious Confession. CHRIST brings forth Moses and Elias, (remarks an ancient Father,) “that He may show the glory of His Cross, and thus soothe Peter and the other Disciples who were fearing His Death; for they “spake of His decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem.” Wherefore He brings forward those who had exposed themselves to death for God's pleasure,—Moses, in resisting Pharaoh; Elias, in resisting Ahab. But it may be thought that the chief reason why these two great Saints appeared was because they respectively set forth the Law and the Prophets,—that elder dispensation which now “waxed old,” and was “ready to vanish away;” (l) being fulfilled in the person of CHRIST. For both the Law and the Prophets “prophe-sied” of Him, as He Himself declares. (m) Of these two great Saints alone, it is recorded that they sustained a miraculous Fast of forty days, (n) like that of CHRIST: and it seems worth noticing that a wonderful privilege seems to have been conferred, in the case of either, on their mortal bodies. Elijah was translated, and never saw Death. Moses died indeed, (o) and was buried by God; (p) but Michael the Archangel is known to have had his body in special keeping: so that it may be thought to have never seen corruption. (q)

“But Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep:” for it was probably the dead of night. “And when they were awake, they saw His Glory, and the two men that stood with Him.” (r) As for how they can have *known* the men who talked with our LORD to be Moses and Elias, whom they had never seen, one of the Ancients suggests, “that it was through the Majesty which came over them; whereby it is intimated that in the future glory, men will not only know one another, but those also whom they never before have seen.”

4 Then answered Peter, and said unto JESUS, LORD, it is good for us to be here: if Thou wilt, let us make here three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

(f) Compare Dan. vii. 9.

(g) Rev. i. 14 to 16.

(h) Ps. civ. 2.

(i) Habakkuk iii. 4.

(k) St. Luke ix. 31.

(l) Heb. viii. 13.

(m) St. Matth. xi. 13. Compare St. John i. 45.

(n) Moses fasted three times for forty days: namely, Deut. ix. 9, 18, and Exod. xxxiv. 1, 2, 28.

(o) Joshua i. 2.

(p) Deut. xxxiv. 6.

(q) Consider St. Jude's Epistle,—verse 9; and compare that place with Hebrews ii. 14.

(r) St. Luke ix. 32.

"Not knowing what he said:"(s) or, as St. Mark expresses it,—“for he wist not what to say: for they were sore afraid.”(t)

And yet, the question arises, What should have induced the Apostle to propose such a measure? One of the best of expositors (u) says that “seeing in this place great quietness and solitude, Peter thought that it would be a fit spot to take up their abode in; saying, ‘Master, it is good for us to be here.’ And he proposed to build tabernacles;” (that is, temporary dwelling-places,) “for he concluded that if he did this, JESUS would not go up to Jerusalem, and suffer.” . . . Take notice that a wish to *detain* the heavenly guests seems to have been St. Peter’s motive in speaking: for it is noticed particularly that he spoke *as Moses and Elias “departed.”*(x) This falls in very well with the supposition of those who have thought that “Peter was so delighted at this view of the Majesty of the LORD, that forgetting everything else in the World, he would have abode there forever.” . . . It seems certain that this great Apostle, notwithstanding his late Confession, notwithstanding our LORD’s many hints concerning the nature of His coming Kingdom, yet dreamed of Earthly splendour. He still thought that the Kingdom of the Elect was to be set up here on earth.

5, 6 While He yet spake, behold, a Bright Cloud overshadowed them: and behold a Voice out of the Cloud, which said, This is My Beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased; hear ye Him. And when the Disciples heard it, they fell on their face, and were sore afraid.

For some remarks on these two verses, the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Luke ix. 34, 35, 36. St. Matthew alone mentions that this was “a *bright cloud*:” in which announcement, the contrast between the Law and the Gospel is to be discerned; for when *the law* was given, the Mountain burned with fire, “with darkness, clouds, and thick darkness.”(y) . . . Moses learns here more than he had foretold concerning the “Prophet like unto himself,” whom God was to raise up hereafter to Israel.(z)—In the meantime, the Disciples have fallen to the ground; blinded by the excess of Light, and overcome by the awful spectacle and sound which they had witnessed.

7 And JESUS came and touched them, and said, Arise, and be not afraid.

This tender act of encouragement is noticed only by St. Matthew. How does it recall what happened in the case of the “man greatly beloved!”—“I . . . saw this great vision, and there remained no strength in me. . . . Yet heard I the voice of His words: and when I heard the voice of His words, then was I in a deep sleep on my face, and my face toward the ground. And behold, *an hand touched me*, which set me upon my knees and upon the palms of my hands.” And He said unto me, O Daniel, a man greatly beloved, understand the words that I speak unto thee, and stand upright.”(a) . . . Consider also how it fared with the beloved Disciple, when, by Revelation, he found himself in the same awful presence: “When I saw Him, I fell at His feet as dead. And *He laid His right Hand upon me*, saying unto me, Fear not.”(b)

8 And when they had lifted up their eyes, they saw no man, save JESUS only.

Such a Voice from Heaven is three times recorded to have been heard: at the Baptism of our LORD,(c) at the close of His Ministry,(d) and on the present occasion.—The saying itself has been thought to contain a reference to those words of Moses,—“The LORD thy God will raise up unto thee a Prophet . . . like unto me; unto Him ye shall hearken:”(e) words which we know were fulfilled in the person of CHRIST.(f) But the drift of the Heavenly message seems to be somewhat as fol-

(s) St. Luke ix. 33.

(t) St. Mark ix. 6.

(u) Chrysostom.

(x) St. Luke ix. 33.

(y) Deut. iv. 11.

(z) Deut. xviii. 15, 18, 19. Compare Acts iii. 22.

(a) Dan. x. 8, 9, 10, 11. See also viii. 18: ix. 21: x. 18.

(b) Revel. i. 17.

(c) St. Matt. iii. 17.

(d) St. John xii. 28.

(e) Deut. xviii. 15.

(f) See Acts iii. 22, and vii. 37.

lows:—You have looked upon the great Lawgiver of My people; together with that ancient Prophet whom I most highly honoured of all. But you behold those *My Servants* no longer. JESUS, who brings you the Gospel, is found alone. Learn from this that the types of the Law and the predictions of the Prophets are in Him fulfilled, and have, in a manner, ceased: that from henceforth a new dispensation is about to begin. This is *My Beloved SON*: from henceforth listen to *His* voice, and obey *His* Teaching!

Some hours are here passed over in silence. It was now day,—

9 And as they came down from the mountain, JESUS charged them, saying, Tell the vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.

Thus does He, for the second time, at the end of a week, repeat the warning-note of Sorrows to come which He had already uttered in the presence of all His Disciples, when He was in the neighbourhood of Casarea Philippi.^(g)

10, 11 And His Disciples asked Him, saying, Why then say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And JESUS answered and said unto them, Elias truly shall first come, and restore all things:

Elijah had appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, and was already departed. Next morning, therefore, as they were coming down from the mountain, the three Apostles break the solemn silence by inquiring how this was to be reconciled with the well-known interpretation of Malachi iv. 5, 6? a prophecy, which, (as appears from St. John i. 21.)^(h) the Jews explained of the *personal advent* of the Tishbite. Our SAVIOUR spake freely of His own approaching Death and Resurrection. How then was Elias first to “come, and restore all things?” Listen to Him, by whose Spirit the Prophets spake,⁽ⁱ⁾ expounding the language of His ancient servant:—

12, 13 but I say unto you, that Elias is come already, and they knew him not, but have done unto him whatsoever they listed. Likewise shall also the Son of Man suffer of them. Then the Disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist.

They may have remembered the Baptist's attire,^(k) which exactly resembled that of Elijah; as well as other particulars which clearly pointed him out to the eye of Faith as the promised Elijah. Our Lord's mournful allusion to the fate of His Forerunner, may have also helped to convince them that it was none other than John Baptist of whom He spake. Or they may have remembered His express assertion, on a former occasion, that this was he of whom Malachi wrote; and that, if they would receive it, this was Elias, “which was for to come.”^(l)

Notwithstanding, however, this express language of CHRIST, (on two distinct occasions,) and the words of Gabriel,^(m) it was very generally believed by the ancient Church that the Tishbite *will yet appear in person*, before CHRIST's final Advent.

Our attention is next invited to a circumstance of a wholly different nature.—The blessed Company, on descending the Mount of Transfiguration, find a multitude of persons assembled about the nine Apostles who had been left behind, (probably on the previous evening,) at the foot of the Mountain.

14, 15, 16 And when they were come to the multitude, there came to Him a *certain* man, kneeling down to Him, and saying, LORD, have mercy on my Son: for he is a lunatic, and sore vexed; for oftentimes he falleth into the fire, and oft into the water. And I brought him to Thy Disciples, and they could not cure him.

A “lunatic” means properly one whose mental malady is affected by the periodical changes of the Moon. Such, at least, is the meaning of the word. But whe-

(g) See St. Matth. xvi. 21.

(i) 1 St. Peter i. 11.

(l) St. Matth. xi. 10, (quoting Malachi iii. 1.) and 11.

(h) See also Ecclesiastians xlviii. 10.

(k) See note on St. Matth. iii. 4.

(m) St. Luke i. 17.

ther St. Matthew intended to imply more than the Father spoke of his Child, in the ordinary language of ancient and modern times, as one afflicted with madness, may perhaps be questioned. All this, however, is recorded far more in detail by St. Mark,⁽ⁿ⁾ whose Gospel should be carefully consulted in this place by him who desires fully to understand the sacred narrative. The Reader is referred to the remarks which have been already offered on this subject in the notes on St. Mark ix. 14 to 18.—It will be discovered that it was reserved for the second Evangelist to record many points of the very highest interest in connection with the present Miracle.

17 Then JESUS answered and said, O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you? bring him hither to Me.

See the note on St. Mark ix. 19: and take notice that our SAVIOUR here applies to the Jews the very language which Moses had applied to them so long before.^(o) It follows, in St. Mark's Gospel, "And they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the Spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming."^(p)

18 And JESUS rebuked the Devil; and he departed out of him: and the child was cured from that very hour.

But St. Mark relates the dialogue which our SAVIOUR held with the father of the child on this occasion; and the very remarkable form of words in which our Blessed LORD cast out this evil spirit; as well as the Devil's violence on being ejected; and how nearly he thereby deprived the boy of life.^(q) By saying that "the Child was cured from that very hour," St. Matthew here implies that the SAVIOUR's command to the unclean spirit "never more to enter into him," (which St. Mark notices,) was strictly obeyed.

It is quite absurd for the shallow professor of this world's wisdom to set aside this great miracle, or to turn away from it, with a remark that this Boy was evidently afflicted with the disease called *Epilepsy*. The HOLY SPIRIT declares that he was possessed with a "deaf and dumb, unclean spirit." Either, therefore, his was *not* a case of (what men call) "*Epilepsy*;" or, what man would in his case have rightly called by the name of "*Epilepsy*," was, *in point of fact*, the possession of an evil spirit. And Men are quite welcome to choose between these alternatives.

19 Then came the Disciples to JESUS apart, and said, Why could not we cast him out?

Not only "apart," or "privately," (as the word is translated in St. Mark's account of the same transaction,) ^(r) but, (as we there also read,) "when He was come *into the House*." The nature of this inquiry of the nine Apostles has been already explained in the note on St. Mark ix. 28.

20 And JESUS said unto them, Because of your unbelief:

The same cause which made St. Peter begin to sink,^(s)—and the blind man of Bethsaida recover his sight *by degrees*;^(t)—the same cause which endangered the Restoration from Death of Jairus' daughter,^(u) and the Healing of the Lunatic Child;^(x)—*Unbelief* it was, which made the Apostles, (like Samson shorn,) "become weak, and like any other man."^(y) . . . It may be thought that the temporary absence of their Lord, joined with the violence of His enemies, by whom they were surrounded, occasioned this declension of their faith. And if this could happen in the case of *Apostles*, how terrible is the warning which is here conveyed to every one of *us*, when left to ourselves; forsaken, even for an instant, by Him, "without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy!"

(n) St. Mark ix. 14 to 29.

(q) St. Mark ix. 25 to 27.

(t) St. Mark viii. 23 to 25.

(o) Deut. xxxii. 20.

(r) St. Mark ix. 28.

(u) St. Mark v. 35, 36.

(y) Judges xvi. 17.

(p) St. Mark ix. 20.

(s) St. Matth. xiv. 30, 31.

(x) St. Mark ix. 22 to 24.

for verily I say unto you, If ye have Faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain,

(pointing to the Mount of Transfiguration,—the “high mountain,” at the foot of which this miracle was performed; just as He may be presumed to have pointed to the Mount of Olives, on the subsequent occasion, when He employed the same words:)(z)

Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove: and nothing shall be impossible unto you.

To which wonderful words, St. Paul will be found to refer in his Chapter descriptive of the grace of Charity: “and though I have all Faith, *so that I could remove mountains.*”(a)—A manifest contrast is here intended between a grain of mustard-seed, “which indeed is the least of all seeds,”(b)—and a mighty mountain, which is the very emblem of immense bulk.(c) It is implied, moreover, that “the least spiritual power shall be mighty for the overthrow of powers the most formidable, which are merely of this world.”(d) as well as for the removal of those lofty imaginations, those proud swelling things of the heart, which are discoursed of as “mountains” in the prophecy which relates to St. John Baptist.(e) Our SAVIOUR adds,—

21 Howbeit this kind goeth not out but by prayer and fasting.

Thereby teaching us that there are certain kinds of possession against which these are weapons of peculiar efficacy: that against certain of man’s spiritual enemies, he may prevail only by Abstinence in respect of meat and drink, and by Prayer.(f) For more, see the note on St. Mark ix. 29.

22, 23 And while they abode in Galilee, JESUS said unto them, The Son of Man shall be betrayed into the hands of men: and they shall kill Him, and the third day He shall be raised again.

This is that prophetic allusion to His future Passion, Death, and Resurrection, which the Angels referred to in addressing the women who visited the Sepulchre: “Remember how He spake unto you when He was yet in Galilee.”(g) For, (as we are told in the preceding chapter,—“from that time forth,” (namely, from the time of St. Peter’s Confession.) “began JESUS to show unto His Disciples, how that He must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things.”(h)

Take notice that on *this* occasion, neither Simon Peter, nor any of the rest, “took Him, and began to rebuke Him.”(i) It is simply added,

And they were exceeding sorry.

St. Mark relates concerning our SAVIOUR’S journey through Galilee, alluded to in verse 22,—“and He would not that any man should know it.” The reason moreover is added,—“for He taught His Disciples” concerning His coming Death and Passion:(k) that is, He desired to devote the opportunities afforded by this prolonged tour to preparing their minds for the terrible trial of their faith and constancy which was soon to follow, at Jerusalem. It is hard indeed for *us*, familiar as we have become with the Doctrine of the Atonement, to realize the greatness of *their* trial. A crucified King!—a persecuted SAVIOUR!—nay more, One whom they knew to be “the Son of the living God,”(l) yet liable to Death and Resurrection!—this may well have perplexed them: may well have rendered their Divine Master’s patient teaching in private, a most necessary measure.

24 And when they were come to Capernaum, they that received

(z) St. Matt. xxi. 21, 22. St. Mark xi. 22, 23.—Take notice that our LORD is found to have used *almost* the same language on a third, and wholly different occasion: viz. in St. Luke xvii. 6.

(a) 1 Cor. xiii. 2.

(b) St. Matthew xiii. 32.

(c) Is. xl. 4: xli. 15, &c.

(d) Rev. R. C. Trench.

(e) Isaiah xl. 4: quoted in St. Luke iii. 5.

(f) On “Prayer and Fasting,”

see the note on St. Matthew vi. 16.

(g) St. Luke xxiv. 6.

(h) St. Matth. xvi. 21.

(i) St. Matth. xvi. 22.

(k) St. Mark ix. 31.

(l) St. Matthew xvi. 16.

tribute money came to Peter, and said, Doth not your Master pay tribute?

Having reached Capernaum, the tax of half a shekel, (about fifteen pence of our money,) which was yearly demanded of every faithful Israelite for the support of the Temple at Jerusalem,^(m) was claimed of the Son of Man. Concerning this payment, it had been enacted that the rich should not give more, and the poor should not give less than half a shekel;⁽ⁿ⁾—a remarkable regulation, “as containing the mystery that the same price of Redemption must be paid for all; for this it represented. It was for each ‘an atonement,’ ‘a ransom,’ for his soul unto the Lord.”^(o) “They that received tribute money” applied accordingly to Simon Peter,—whose precedence in rank (*though not in authority*) may have been the cause why these men spoke to *him* rather than to any other of the Apostles. The question asked, sounds like a respectful inquiry addressed to all, as to what was the practice and pleasure of “their Master” in this respect: and there is no need of supposing a sinister intention, as on the memorable occasion when the Pharisees and Herodians inquired whether it was “lawful to give tribute unto Cæsar, or not?”^(p)

The two inquiries seem in fact to have been wholly distinct in their object, as well as in their character. *That* was a Civil demand; *this* a Religious one. On both occasions indeed, “tribute” is spoken of; but perhaps on neither occasion is “tribute” strictly meant. A payment levied by the State, and due to the Emperor, (answering in nature somewhat to our *Taxes*,) was the subject of discussion *then*. A payment levied by the officers of the Temple, and due to God, (answering rather to our *Church-Rates*,) was the matter of inquiry *now*.

These payments were further distinguished in respect of the absolute manner in which Cæsar's tribute was exacted of the Jews by their Roman masters; while the half-shekel, which was due to God, and which could not be legally enforced, was simply applied for, by officers of their own nation. Let it be recorded to the honour of the Jews, whether those of Palestine or those of the Dispersion,^(q) that however poor they may have been, however far removed from their native land, they gladly and faithfully paid the yearly sum which they regarded as due to their God. “In almost every city, even those beyond the limits of the Roman Empire, there was a sacred Treasury for the collection of these dues: and then, at certain times, there were messengers selected from among the worthiest, to carry the collected money to Jerusalem.”^(r)

To return however to the subject more immediately before us;—It may be that our Lord on His way to the House, walking in advance of His Disciples, (as His custom was,) had in His Divine Wisdom, *passed by* the well-known officials who stood ready to receive the Temple-tax from every willing Israelite. Appealing to Simon, they seem to say,—“How then? Doth not your Master pay the half-shekel?”

25 He saith, Yes.

It cannot escape notice how promptly St. Peter, answered “Yes” to this inquiry. Nor is it hard to draw the obvious inference from the Apostle's answer. He knew that he was answering for One who never cavilled at demands such as these; who “lived peaceably with all men;”^(s) who rendered “to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour.”^(t) How should such an One refuse to pay what was usual towards the support of the Temple of God?

Wherefore, leaving the men, he entered the house, (*his own* probably,) where Jesus was, either in order to ascertain whether he had answered rightly,—or, (which seems more likely,) to convey to his Lord the tidings of what had taken place.

And when he was come into the house, JESUS prevented him, saying,

(m) On the authority of Exodus xxx. 13. This payment is alluded to in 2 Kings xii. 4, and 2 Chron. xxiv. 5, 6, 9.

(n) Exodus xxx. 15.

(o) Rev. I. Williams.

(p) St. Matthew xxii. 17.

(q) Addressed by St. Peter in his First Epistle,—i. 1.

(r) Trench on the Parables.

(s) Romans xii. 18.

(t) Romans xiii. 7.

What thinkest thou, Simon? of whom do the Kings of the earth take custom or tribute? of their own children, or of strangers?

How must it have astonished the Apostle to find himself thus in the presence of Him who knoweth all things! Simon Peter had not opened his lips to speak, ere his Master, by the question He asked, convinced him that He was privy to what had been passing outside the House.

26 Peter saith unto Him, Of strangers. JESUS saith unto him, Then are the Children free.

The high argument of our Blessed Lord on this occasion may not be overlooked. He reasons with His favoured Apostle thus:—These men have sent thee to ask Me for the money which is claimed of the people of the Land, towards the support of God's Temple; thereby implying that *I* am as one of *them*. But thou well knowest that even the *Kings of the Earth*^(a) take no custom or tribute from their own sons. Consider therefore with thyself whether I am not justly free from this payment which is levied in the name of the *King of Heaven*; since the Temple is none other than the House of the Living God,—whose own Son thou hast already confessed Me to be. Hath He not “appointed” Me “heir of all things?”^(x) am I not “as a Son” over Mine “own House?”^(y) . . . It may be added,—How shall “One greater than the Temple,”^(z) contribute towards the Temple's support? How shall He, who is to be the ransom for every other soul, give the money which Moses commanded, as “a ransom” for *His own*?^(a)—Here then, we have a distinct assertion of the Godhead of CHRIST. But a *direct proof* follows:

27 Notwithstanding, lest we should offend them,

Let the whole course of the Divine Reasoning be duly noticed. Here was a mistaken and an unfair demand,—one which might have been reasonably resisted, and safely set aside. Nevertheless what says our Great Example? Lest I should be casting a stumbling-block in their way by declaring the awful reality whereby I am properly exempt from this payment: lest, again, by refusing their demand, I should seem to be casting a slight on Religion, should awaken angry feelings and uncharitable suspicions,—unfounded indeed and untrue, yet injurious alike to Me and to them;—“lest we should *offend* them,”

go thou to the sea, and cast an hook, and take up the Fish that first cometh up; and when thou hast opened his mouth, thou shalt find a piece of money: that take, and give unto them for Me and thee.

How obvious is the practical lesson here conveyed to him who desires to follow in his Lord's footsteps,—that a claim which may not only be disputed, but even proved unjust, should yet be discharged, to avoid offence!

With these words then, the Evangelist concludes his Divine narration. He does not tell us what followed: nor is it needful that he should. Simon Peter, followed by the Eleven Apostles, proceeded to the edge of the Lake; and, nothing doubting, “cast an hook.” As anciently a whale, so now one of the lesser creatures which “pass through the paths of the seas,”^(b) is prompt to obey the bidding of the CREATOR. The hook is no sooner cast, than the fish rises to the surface, and is captured instantly: and in his mouth is found a piece of money called a “stater,” in value about thirty pence, with which St. Peter pays jointly for himself and his Lord.

“Give unto them [*as a ransom*] for Me and thee.”—“Here comes out the deeper meaning of the Lord not paying for Himself only, but for Peter, who represents all the faithful. He came under the same yoke with men, that they might enter into the same freedom which was His.”^(c)

Another excellent writer, already quoted, observes,—“As the Virgin Mother made the offering of the turtle-doves, though she needed no Purification from that Birth; as CHRIST submitted to Circumcision, though He needed not mortification,—

(a) Compare Ps. ii. 2.

(z) St. Matthew xii. 6.

(c) Trench.

(x) Heb. i. 2.

(a) See Exodus xxx. 12.

(y) Heb. iii. 6.

(b) Ps. viii. 8.

and to Baptism, though He needed not washing: so now does He pay the token of Redemption," who came to redeem Mankind.

Take notice that this Miracle,—(which is found only in St. Matthew's Gospel; St. Mark ever omitting the transactions which redound most to St. Peter's honour,) (*d*)—is one of the three in which the second Adam asserts His "dominion over the fish of the sea." Was not *that* dominion given Him "in the beginning?" "the fish of the Sea," being mentioned *before* either "the fowl of the air," or "the cattle." (*e*)

It is still more worthy of notice how sublime an assertion of "His eternal power and Godhead," (*f*) was the *manner* in which our Blessed SAVIOUR satisfied the demand recorded in the text: as well as how splendidly the Miracle by which He paid the tax, compensated for the injury offered to His Divine Majesty, by its exaction. How convincing a proof was it, of that Divine Sonship which Simon Peter had already confessed, (*g*) and which our SAVIOUR had been just now declaring to Simon Peter! (*h*) And it is ever thus, in the History of our LORD'S Life. Some token of Heaven is ever found to appear, when He seems most "despised and rejected," most "acquainted with grief," (*i*) "a worm and no man." (*k*) Did not Angels and a Star herald His Birth in a Manger? and the quaking Earth and darkened Sun give tidings that He was expiring on the Cross?

CHAPTER XVIII.

1 CHRIST warneth His Disciples to be humble and harmless. 7 To avoid offences, and not to despise the little ones. 15 Teacheth how we are to deal with our Brethren, when they offend us. 21 And how oft to forgive them. 23 Which He setteth forth by a parable of the King, that took account of his servants, 32 and punished him who showed no mercy to his fellow.

1 At the same time came the Disciples unto JESUS, saying, Who is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?

The "time" spoken of, will be discovered by a reference to the close of the foregoing chapter. It was the occasion of our LORD'S return to Capernaum, after a prolonged absence with His Disciples. It was the Autumn of the third and last year of His Ministry, shortly before the Feast of Tabernacles.—When the honour which had recently befallen three of the Apostles, (*l*) and one of their number in particular, (*m*) is remembered, it will perhaps be less a matter of surprise that, about this time, "by the way, they had disputed among themselves who should be the greatest" (*n*) in that Kingdom of which they had lately heard so much: (*o*) and to an actual view of the glories of which, three of their number had been recently admitted. If, after the Resurrection, the Disciples could ask Him, saying, "LORD, wilt Thou at this time restore the Kingdom to Israel," (*p*) shall we wonder if they held wrong notions on the subject at the time spoken of in the text?

It is worth observing that though they had been disputing among themselves which of the three was greatest, *that* is not the form which the inquiry they addressed to our LORD assumed. He indeed asked them, "What was it that you dis-

(*d*) See the note prefixed to St. Mark i.

(*e*) See Genesis i. 26, 28.

(*f*) Rom. i. 20.

(*g*) St. Matthew xvi. 20.

(*h*) See above, ver. 25, 26.

(*i*) Isaiah liii. 3.

(*k*) Ps. xxii. 6.

(*l*) St. Matth. xvii. 1.

(*m*) St. Matth. xvi. 17 to 19: xvii. 27.

(*n*) St. Mark ix. 34.

(*o*) St. Matt. xvi. 19, 28.

(*p*) Acts i. 6. Consider St. Luke xxii. 29, 30.

puted among yourselves by the way?"(f) Conscience-stricken however, in the presence of One whom they knew to be so meek and lowly, they met His question by another. "Who" (they ask) "is the greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?"

St. Mark says that, in reply to this question,—“He sat down, and called the Twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, the same shall be last of all, and servant of all:”(g) words which our Lord is found to have almost repeated on two other occasions.(h)

2 And JESUS called a little child unto Him, and set him in the midst of them,

The thrice-happy object of the SAVIOUR's words on this occasion must have been more than an infant: since CHRIST is said to have “called him unto Him, and set him in the midst:” unlike that other occasion when He is merely related to have graciously taken the children “up in His arms.”(i)

3 And said, Verily I say unto you, Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

It requires but moderate acquaintance with little Children to perceive how lofty a model our SAVIOUR CHRIST here sets before us. So truthful, guileless, and simple; so obedient and docile; so trustful and believing; so pure and loving; so forgetful of injuries, and grateful for kindness,—would He have *all* His Disciples to be. And those who exhibit no resemblance to this picture, “shall not [even] enter into the Kingdom of Heaven;” much less, occupy the place of the “greatest” in it.

But it is clear from the context, that the special attribute of Children which our SAVIOUR here recommends to the imitation of His Church, is their freedom from anything like Pride, and the desire of being preferred before others. Ambition is a passion which finds no place in *their* bosoms. Wherefore, little children are set before us evermore as patterns of Humility: and those who have allowed themselves in aspiring hopes, and vain thoughts, and proud wishes, are directed by their Master, who “took upon Him the form of a servant,”(k) and was “meek and lowly in heart,”(l) to “become as little children,” if they would enter into Bliss. They must convert, and turn themselves,—or rather, yielding to the influence of the HOLY SPIRIT, must “be converted,” and turned—from the temper which is so hateful in God's sight, if they would be highly esteemed in CHRIST's Everlasting Kingdom. As it follows:

4, 5, Whosoever therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven. And whoso shall receive one such little child in My Name receiveth Me.

A few words will be found on this subject in the note on St. Mark ix. 37.

6, 7 But whoso shall offend one of these little ones which believe in Me, it were better for him that a mill-stone were hanged about his neck, and *that* he were drowned in the depth of the sea. Woe unto the World because of offences! for it must needs be that offences come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh!

These two verses are also found connected, but in an inverted order, in a different part of St. Luke's Gospel.(m) With such solemn language does the LORD “make a hedge about”(n) the lowly, the poor, the meek, the righteous, and the young! He who “offends them,”—that is, causes them to stumble or fall,—does it at his peril. Death by drowning were a far better portion than the bitter end which will be *his*.(o)

(f) See St. Mark ix. 33.

(g) St. Mark x. 16.

(m) St. Luke xvii. 1, 2.

(y) St. Mark ix. 35.

(k) Phil. ii. 7.

(n) Job i. 10.

(h) St. Matth. xx. 26, 27, and xxiii. 11.

(i) St. Matt. xi. 29.

(o) See note on St. Mark ix. 42.

It cannot fail, in this sinful world, but that "offences," (hinderances to Faith and Obedience,) should come. Woe to that man, however, by whom the hinderance cometh!

8, 9 Wherefore, if thy hand or thy foot offend thee, cut them off, and cast *them* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into Life halt or maimed, rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into everlasting fire. And if thine eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast *it* from thee: it is better for thee to enter into Life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into Hell-fire.

This is given even more solemnly in St. Mark's Gospel, where several remarks have been offered on the subject,—to which the Reader is referred.(p)

10 Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones;

"Not *one*!" so minute is God's Providence.

for I say unto you, that in Heaven their Angels do always behold the Face of My FATHER which is in Heaven.

Surely, the most wonderful revelation of any which our SAVIOUR hath made to us concerning the dignity of Little Children! "Take heed that you offend them not; for their Angels," &c.: as if implying that the danger of incurring the displeasure of the Angels is, in itself, a terrible thing.

"*Their Angels*," can only mean that little children have Guardian-Angels, and are under the constant care of those glorious Beings whom God created upright; who have "kept their first estate,"(q) and are ever in Heaven, where God is.

But the words which follow prove that even more than this is implied. When it is said "their Angels do always *behold the face of the FATHER*,"—it is clearly taught that the "little ones" of whom CHRIST speaks, are committed to the care of the *highest order* of the Angelic Host: to those who (like Gabriel) continually "stand in the presence of God,"(r) and gather glory from beholding the Light of His Countenance. The phrase seems to be taken from the Courts of Earthly Sovereigns, where the Counsellors of highest rank were said "to behold the face of the King:"(s) and recalls our LORD's declaration to Nathanael concerning that free intercourse between Heaven and Earth which was about to be established: when Heaven should be open; and the Angels of God should freely "ascend and descend" between Earth and Heaven.(t)

The question—Whether all have their Guardian Angel? is, in part, answered by the text; for the guardianship of the just will not surely cease because the age of Childhood is past. The phrase "little ones," on our LORD's lips, denotes as many as have childlike hearts; that is, the lowly, the guileless, and the pure, whatever their age may happen to be. And the Apostle's well-known exclamation concerning the office of the Holy Angels,—"*Are they not all ministering Spirits, sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation?*"(u) must be allowed to establish the same doctrine, beyond all controversy. But whether each individual has his own several Guardian Spirit,—a Guardian Angel to himself,—as it is no where laid down in Scripture, and only once hinted at as a matter of Jewish belief,(x) so can it only be maintained as a matter of pious opinion. Enough, surely, of a very surprising kind, has been revealed to us on this mysterious subject;(y) and the Apostle hath left us a solemn warning, in connection with the Angelic order of beings, against "intruding into those things which we have not seen,"(z)

"He gives yet another reason, weightier than the foregoing, why the little ones are not to be despised:"(a)

11 For the Son of Man is come to save that which was lost.

(p) See the notes on St. Mark ix. 43 to 48.

(q) St. Jude, ver. 6.

(s) 1 Kings x. 8. 2 Kings xxv. 19: (See the margin.) Esther i. 14.

(t) St. John i. 51.

(u) Heb. i. 14.

(r) St. Luke i. 19.

(x) Acts xii. 15.

(y) See Ps. xxxiv. 7: xci. 11. St. Luke xv. 7, 10,—where see note.

(z) Col. ii. 18.

(a) Chrysostom.

As much as to say, See that ye despise not one of these accepted little ones; for I have emptied Myself of My Glory,—“made Myself of no reputation, and taken upon Me the form of a Servant,”^(b)—in order to save a World, ruined and undone. The saying recurs in St. Luke xix. 20. And to this reasoning, He adds a parable, the intent of which is to show the Heavenly Shepherd’s concern for the very least of His flock which has gone astray.

12 How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains,

Rather, “Doth he not leave the ninety and nine upon the mountains,”^(c) (for “the mountains” were grassy, and well adapted for the pasturing of sheep) “and goeth,”—

13 and seeketh that which is gone astray? And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that *sheep*, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray.

The Parable of The Lost Sheep was twice delivered by our LORD. St. Luke relates it in his 15th chapter;^(d) St. Matthew in this place. And it is observable that the same great point is brought out on *both* occasions,—namely, the excessive joy felt by the Good Shepherd on recovering the single sheep which He had lost: a subject which will be found sufficiently remarked upon in another place.^(e)

The points of difference are few, but interesting. Here, the Shepherd is seen tending His flock upon the Mountains: there, upon the Waste. There, the sheep was simply said to be lost: here, it is declared to have “gone astray;” and either statement is *twice* repeated. There, a successful pursuit was assumed; for the Shepherd found His sheep,—laid it on His shoulders,—came home,—and called His neighbours to rejoice with Him: here, a doubt as to the result is thrown out. We are told how the Shepherd will feel towards His sheep—“*if so be that He find it.*”

There seems moreover to have been a slight difference of intention on the part of the Blessed Speaker, on the two occasions when He delivered this Parable. Here, CHRIST’s care for each individual little one, seems to be the point to which our attention is chiefly directed.

14 Even so it is not the will of your FATHER which is in Heaven, that one of these little ones should perish.

He has described the conduct of an earthly shepherd: “Even so,” (he adds,) “is your Heavenly Father supremely careful for the safety of the least lamb of His flock.” And this concludes the train of thought which began at verse 11: for it is implied that men may well “take heed that they occasion not the fall of one of these little ones;” to seek and to save whom, the Son of Man came into the World,—yea, for whom He died.^(f)

15 Moreover if thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone: if he shall hear thee, thou hast gained thy brother.

“By which, it is made plain,” (says one of the Fathers,) “that enmities are a loss to both sides: for CHRIST saith not ‘Thy Brother hath saved himself;’ but,—‘Thou hast gained thy Brother;’ which shows that both of you had suffered loss by your disagreement.”^(g) “In saying another, Salvation is gained for ourselves also.”

A “Brother” in the Faith, is here intended; and it is clearly some heinous offence which our LORD alludes to, since He presently directs that it shall be brought, (if need be,) before the authorities of the Church.

16 But if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two

(b) Phil. ii. 7.

(c) Compare the language of St. Luke xv. 4.

(d) St. Luke xv. 3 to 7.

(e) See the note on St. Luke xv. 7.

(f) So St. Paul argues: Rom. xiv. 15, and 1 Cor. viii. 11.

(g) Chrysostom.

more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established.

Rather "*the whole matter* may be established." It was to be proved by the testimony of two or three witnesses, according to the provision of the Law: ^(h) and it is evident from what follows that these witnesses were to assist in bringing the offender to a sense of his duty.

17 And if he shall neglect to hear them, tell *it* unto the Church:

This is that rebuke "*before all*" of which St. Paul speaks in his First Epistle to Timothy. ⁽ⁱ⁾

but if he neglect to hear the Church, let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican.

By which words, our Lord is clearly giving rules for conduct *among Christians*. He alludes to wrongs sustained *within His Church*; and speaks of that Church as armed with powers of her own,—powers which are accordingly found in full operation in St. Paul's time! ^(k)

The consequence of "neglect to hear the Church," (as this saying of our Lord clearly implies,) can be none other than exclusion from Church-membership; being cut off from the body of the faithful. Not that a man becomes thereby excluded from the Church's sympathy: but by becoming like "an heathen man,"—(one of those for whose Repentance and Conversion the Church toils night and day,)—he loses every privilege to which Baptism entitled him. And let none suppose that Excommunication is a vain decree,—for, (the Lord of Heaven and Earth has spoken it,)—

18 Verily I say unto you, Whatsoever ye shall bind on Earth shall be bound in Heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on Earth shall be loosed in Heaven.

Whomsoever the Church regards as "a heathen man and a publican," she *binds*; but she *looses* him who, when reprov'd, neglects not to hear her admonition. . . . These memorable words will be recognized as having been addressed on a former occasion to Simon Peter. ^(l) They contain "an allusion very intelligible to the Apostles, as it was a power already exercised by the Jewish synagogue; and taken from them, and conferred by CHRIST Himself on His Church, which is to be to the end." ^(m)

"There is a power within the Church," (observes Bishop Pearson,) "to cast those out who do belong to it; for 'if any neglect to hear the Church,' saith our SAVIOUR, 'let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican.' By great and scandalous offences we may incur the censure of the Church of God; and while we are shut out by them, we stand excluded out of Heaven. For our SAVIOUR said to His Apostles, upon whom He built His Church, 'Whosoever sins ye remit, they are remitted unto them; and whosoever sins ye retain, they are retained.'"

Not only will such sentences, passed by high and competent authority, be found to prevail with God; but the requests of two or three believers gathered together in His name, shall be granted. As it follows,—

19 Again I say unto you, That if two of you shall agree on Earth as touching any thing that they shall ask, it shall be done for them of My FATHER which is in Heaven.

But it concerns all Christian men rightly to understand so gracious a promise. Let it be observed therefore, (1st.) that, in order to *prevailing Prayer*, they who thus unite, must be righteous: for "we know that God heareth not sinners." ⁽ⁿ⁾ Next, (2nd.) that the gifts demanded of God must be in themselves *good*: for God

^(h) Deut. xix 15. St. Paul has the same quotation: 2 Cor. xiii. 1.

⁽ⁱ⁾ 1 Tim. v. 20.

^(k) 1 Cor. v. 1 to 5, &c.; vi. 1 to 6. 1 Tim. i. 20, &c.

^(l) St. Matth. xvi. 19.

^(m) Williams.

⁽ⁿ⁾ St. John ix. 31. Compare 1 St. John iii. 21, 22.

is pledged only to "give *good things* to them that ask Him."(*o*) Then, (3rd.) that Prayer must be faithful, earnest, and persevering: for "men ought always to pray, and not to faint."(*p*) Lastly, (4th.) that the end proposed must be just and holy: for St. James notes it as the special reason why men "ask and receive not," because they "ask amiss, that they may consume it upon their lusts."(*q*)

20 For where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them.

Take notice that this promise is made to such only as meet in *CHRIST's Name*: that is, to such as gather together in the manner which He has directed, and for a purpose which He will approve. These two verses are accordingly made the plea of *CHRIST's Church*, day by day, at the conclusion both of Morning and Evening Prayer.(*r*)

The Divine Discourse having been thus concluded, St. Peter comes forward to ask a question,—seemingly with reference to what our LORD had said in verse 15: for, in substance, what precedes might evidently be expressed in the language which is found on our SAVIOUR's lips on a subsequent occasion: "If thy Brother trespass against thee, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him."(*s*)

21, 22 Then came Peter to Him, and said, LORD, how oft shall my Brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times? JESUS saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

St. Peter perhaps thought that he was proposing a truly Evangelical measure of Forgiveness; but his LORD taught him that Forgiveness should know no bounds. For *CHRIST* does not here limit a number; but signifies something without limit.(*t*) "Be ye kind one to another," (says the Apostle,) "tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for *CHRIST's* sake, hath forgiven you."(*u*) And it is observable that the self-same example of forgiveness which St. Paul thus proposes, is set before us by our SAVIOUR *CHRIST* in the Parable which follows. Its purpose is "to make clear that when God calls on man to forgive, He does not call on him to renounce a right: but that man has in fact no right to exercise in the matter:" and it is difficult to imagine how this could have been more forcibly shown, than in the Parable of the Unmerciful Servant.

23 Therefore is the Kingdom of Heaven likened unto a certain King, which would take account of his servants.

It is needless to point out who are represented by the "certain King," and by "the Servants" in this Parable. The "King of Kings"(*x*) "takes account" of us, as often as by illness or misfortune, by conscience, by His Scriptures, or in any other way, He brings our sins home to our remembrance; alarms the soul, and awakens the sinner to a sense of his great danger. The Psalmist was thus dealt with, when he exclaimed,—*"Mine iniquities have taken hold upon me, so that I am not able to look up: they are more than the hairs of my head; therefore my heart faileth me."*(*y*)

24 And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

A very enormous sum; and which will seem to show that this person must have been one of the King's chief officers. There is no need of supposing that these were talents of *gold*: but ten thousand talents of silver even, would have been equivalent to about two millions of English money. It was perhaps the tribute due from many cities for several years, or the revenue of an entire Province, in respect of which he proved a defaulter. Though mention is made of "a servant,"

(*o*) St. Matt. vii. 11.

(*p*) St. James iv. 3.

(*q*) St. Luke xvii. 3. Compare also the next

(*t*) Compare Gen. iv. 24.

(*r*) Rev. xix. 16.

(*p*) St. Luke xviii. 1. St. James i. 5, 6, 7.

(*r*) See the Prayer of St. Chrysostom.

(*s*) St. Luke xviii. 22, with St. Luke xvii. 4.

(*u*) Ephes. iv. 32. Compare Col. iii. 13.

(*y*) Ps. xl. 12.

therefore, it is plain that the warning of the Parable is derived from the conduct of one who belonged to the highest rank of Society.

"Since the Law is set forth in *ten* precepts," (says the great Father of the West,) "let us consider that the '*ten* thousand talents' which this man owed, denote all things which can be done under the Law."—Language derived from worldly obligation, and especially terms which are in strictness applicable only to debts of money, are constantly employed by our SAVIOUR to illustrate the position in which we stand towards God. Consider the very language of the LORD'S PRAYER, as it is found set down in St. Matthew's Gospel: "Forgive us *our debts*, as we forgive *our debtors*." (z) And observe that we stand indebted to GOD for all His gifts "of nature, of grace, or of fortune. All opportunities of good in thought, word, and deed; duties to ourselves, to our neighbours, and to GOD; time, abilities, and spheres of influence; education, examples, relationships; these all are talents to be accounted for!" (a) The World is so well aware of this, that it has learned (from Scripture) to call a man's abilities, his *talents*.

25 But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

Neither Type nor Parable is always capable of being pressed in its minuter details. Followed out beyond a certain point, the most obvious Type, the very plainest Parable, conducts us into the regions of Fancy; where wild conjecture must supply the place of rational criticism. In the present instance it may fairly be doubted if any allegorical meaning is to be sought for in this mention of the Servant's "wife and children;" especially when it is remembered that the hardship which the man was about to incur, was the established penalty under the Jewish Law, of a Debtor who had not wherewith to pay. The Creditor, in such case, took his family as bondsmen. (b) The heavy penalty of Sin is therefore here indicated,—namely, to be "sold into the hands of the Enemy." (c) "Which of My creditors is it to whom I have sold you?" (asks the LORD by His Prophet:) "Behold, for your iniquities have ye sold yourselves." (d)

26 The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

To fall down with the face to the earth, before a person high in authority, is in the East an usual act of homage,—or, as it is here termed, of "worship" . . . In his terror, the servant promises to "pay all," if he may but have his sentence remitted: but the defaulter in such a sum *cannot* pay all. "He must let *that* alone for ever." (e)

27 Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

The command that he should be sold, therefore, ("and his wife, and children, and all that he had,") "issued not of cruelty, but of unspeakable tenderness. For by these terrors, his lord sought to bring him to plead that he might not be sold," (f) which actually happened, and with the blessed result which has been just now laid before us. Nay: the largeness of the creditor's *Love* is the thing which here most strikes us. The servant asked only for a short respite, and engaged to pay the whole of the debt in the end. But his lord grants him more than he even dared to ask: for he freely cancels the entire obligation, and forgives him all.

"The severity of God only endures till the Sinner is brought to recognize his guilt. It is indeed only Love in disguise. Having done its work, having brought Man to the acknowledgment of his guilt and misery, it re-appears as grace again; granting more than had either been asked or hoped; loosing the bands of sin, and letting the prisoner go free."

And yet "he did not remit the debt till he had 'taken account:' because he desired that the other might be made aware how great a debt he was forgiven; and might thereby become the more merciful towards his fellow-servants."

(z) St. Matt. vi. 12.

(b) Levit. xxv. 39, 41: compare 2 Kings iv. 1.

(d) Isaiah l. 1. Consider Ps. xlv. 12.

(a) Rev. I. Williams.

(c) Consider Judges ii. 14: iii. 8: iv. 2: x. 7.

(e) Ps. xlix. 8.

(f) Chrysostom.

28 But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellow-servants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

There had been no such peremptory language used towards himself, by his lord, in the first instance: much less had he sustained any such savage treatment. This stern demand, it was reserved for *him* to make of his fellow-servant, on going out from the presence of his lord!

Observe, that by "fellow-servant" is here meant one who, like himself, was a servant in respect of the "King" mentioned in verse 23. "An hundred pence" are to "ten thousand talents" (speaking roughly) as one to a million: and this sets forth, as far as numbers reasonably may, the disproportion between the trespasses committed against us by our fellow-men, and which *we* are called upon to forgive; and those which ALMIGHTY GOD hath "frankly forgiven" us, "forasmuch as we had not to pay." There is, in truth, scarcely any relation between the respective amounts. It is as a drop of water in comparison of the boundless ocean.

29 And his fellow-servant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

The plea was the self-same which he had lately urged so successfully himself. But neither the recollection of his lord's kindness, nor his own recent misery, nor the sight of one poor as himself in trouble,—made any impression on that hard heart. "He does not even respect the very words which had saved himself: for it follows,"—

30 And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

He not only failed to forgive him, but he would not even "have *patience*." "He went" the way of Cain, from natural piety, and brotherly affection,—*went* and cast him into prison."(*g*)

31 So when their fellow-servants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Rather, "declared fully" to their lord.

"Wrath" against Sin is the proper attribute of GOD.(*h*) "Sorrow" is for men. The "fellow-servants"(*i*) tell their LORD all that is done,—*"crying day and night unto him."*(*k*)

32 Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him,

"Called him," (as it has been remarked with obvious truth,) "by the sentence of Death, and bade him pass out of this World." The LORD, at the Judgment day, will say unto such an one,—

O thou wicked servant,

Observe, that the lord did not chide his servant for owing him ten thousand talents. He neither called him "wicked," nor even reproached him: but simply was about to suffer him to incur the known penalty of the Law,—which is "holy; and the Commandment holy, and just, and good."(*l*) It is his cruel treatment of his fellow-servant which draws forth the language of reproach: "O thou wicked servant,"—

I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me: shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellow-servant, even as I had pity on thee?

"*Thou wert forgiven*: shouldest thou not at least have *had compassion*?"(*m*) "Observe that the guilt laid to his charge is not that needing mercy, he refused to show it; but that *having received* mercy, he remains unmerciful."(*n*)

(*g*) Rev. I. Williams.

(*i*) Rev. vi. 11.

(*l*) Rom. vii. 12.

(*h*) See below, the note on ver. 34.

(*k*) St. Luke xviii. 7.

(*m*) See above, the note on ver. 30.

(*n*) Trench.

We are directed to say daily, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive them that trespass against us." But this parable reminds us of the obligation under which we lie, so to "forgive them that trespass against us;" namely, because *we* have already *been forgiven*.

Take notice, that no answer of the unmerciful Servant is recorded. He seems to have been "speechless."^(o) By which, says an ancient Writer, "it is shown that in the Day of Judgment, all excusing of ourselves will be impossible." We shall be, and we shall *know* ourselves to be, without excuse before God.

And so, "because kindness had not mended him, it remains that he be corrected by punishment. As it follows,"—

34 And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

Not merely "delivered him," but "*was angry*,"—which was not said before. As a debtor, he incurred a penalty: but as one who "had no pity,"^(p) he deserved a heavy punishment: for, it is written, "He shall have judgment without mercy that hath showed no mercy."^(q) And "when God takes vengeance on Sinners, then He is said to be "wroth."

"The tormentors" must be those evil Spirits who inhabit the "place of torment,"^(r) "the Devil and his angels,"^(s) as it is elsewhere said. The term is borrowed from a usage in respect of debt, to which our Law is an utter stranger.—And for how long was the condemned Servant delivered over to that accursed bondage? "Till he should pay *all that was due*." But could this *ever* be? *Never*, certainly; for "there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave."^(t) The Sinner on whom God denounces that awful sentence,—"*Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence, till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing*,"^(u)—must be condemned to everlasting torment. In this place, therefore, "*till*" has the well-known meaning, already explained,^(x) and which it has in so many parts of Scripture.^(y) It does not indicate the time when punishment *will cease*: but the time up to which punishment *will continue*.

"God says, 'Forgive, and ye shall be forgiven.'^(z) I first forgave *you*; therefore do *ye* 'Forgive.' But if you forgive not, I will call you back and require again the whole sum which before I had forgiven." So far an ancient Father;^(a) in allusion to the obvious, and very remarkable circumstance, that the Servant was not imprisoned, after all, for his cruelty; but for the very debt which, in the first instance he had been forgiven. This certainly opens a difficult question, in respect of the forgiveness of sins. The true way to meet it seems to be to point out that though the gifts of God are without repentance,^(b) yet that when Man, by heinous Sin, breaks his Baptismal Covenant, and cuts himself off from Communion with CHRIST, he thereby cancels the deed which assured him of Pardon; falls back into a state of Nature: and thus incurs the penalty of the old sins which were actually forgiven him. In this case, it is not God who revokes His gift; but Man who *refuses to accept it*.

35 So likewise shall My heavenly FATHER do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.

Our Divine Master will have no *pretended* reconciliation. The forgiveness which He requires must be *from the heart*; or He will not allow it to be any forgiveness at all.—How surprising are the many injunctions we meet with in the Gospel concerning Forgiveness of Injuries! It would seem that an unforgiving temper must be one of the greatest snares to which our fallen nature is exposed. The same observation has been already forced upon us; namely, when we were taking a review of our Blessed Lord's Teaching, as contained in the Sermon on the Mount.^(c)

(o) St. Matthew xxii. 12.

(r) St. Luke xvi. 28.

(u) St. Matth. v. 26.

(y) See besides St. Matth. v. 26: xxviii. 20. Ezra iv. 5, &c.

(z) St. Luke vi. 37.

(c) See the note on St. Matth. vii. 27, p. 69.

(p) 2 Samuel xii. 6.

(s) St. Matth. xxv. 41.

(x) See the note on St. Matth. i. 25.

(a) Augustine.

(q) St. James ii. 13.

(t) Eccl. ix. 10.

(b) Rom. xi. 29.

CHAPTER XIX.

2 CHRIST *healeth the sick.* 3 *Answereth the Pharisees concerning divorcement.* 10 *Showeth when Marriage is necessary.* 13 *Receiveth little Children.* 16 *Instructeth the Young Man how to attain Eternal Life.* 20 *And how to be perfect.* 23 *Telleth His Disciples how hard it is for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.* 27 *And promiseth reward to those that forsake any thing to follow Him.*

1, 2 AND it came to pass, *that* when JESUS had finished these sayings, He departed from Galilee, and came into the coasts of Judæa beyond Jordan;

And thus our LORD in the course of His Ministry will be found to have traversed every part of the Holy Land, and for a time to have made His abode in each great division of the Country. Often in Galilee, and once as far as Tyre and Sidon, we have lately seen Him on the Eastern side of the Jordan also, as far northward as the ancient Dan. He traversed Samaria, and abode at Sychar.^(a) In Judæa, and at Jerusalem, (at Bethany also,) He is often heard of: here, He is found in "the coasts of Judæa," whither He had proceeded "by the farther side of Jordan."^(b) That is, He had come through Peræa, and was now in that part of Judæa which lay on the Eastern side of the river.

and great multitudes followed Him; and He healed them there.

"And, as He was wont," (adds St. Mark,) "*He taught them again:*"^(c) for He was the Physician of souls,—by His Works confirming His Words. . . . It seems to be well known where He was: for it follows,—

3 The Pharisees also came unto Him, tempting Him, and saying unto Him, Is it lawful for a man to put away his Wife for every cause?

These were doubtless envoys from Jerusalem, sent by the Sanhedrin, (the chief Council of the nation,) with the accursed object of molesting the Holy One. Their present inquiry seems to have been intended to betray Him into some statement which might be thought contrary either to the laws of Chastity, or to the Law of Moses. But it can scarce be doubted that it was so contrived as to make the Divine Teacher obnoxious to a powerful section of their body; for it concerned a question which is known to have been much disputed in the Jewish Schools, and which had divided them into parties. Some of the Rabbis taught that on *any* pre-text, however frivolous, wicked, or absurd, Divorce was allowable,—provided only it were effected in due form.

4 And He answered and said unto them, Have ye not read, that He which made *them* at the beginning made them Male and Female;

Our LORD refers to what is written in Genesis i. 27, and v. 2. A learned Father remarks upon it, that by this text alone, our LORD convinced them of their error: "for He said not '*male and females,*' (which was what was sought by the putting away of the first;) but, '*male and female,*' implying *one* tie in wedlock."^(d)

5 and said, For this cause shall a man leave Father and Mother, and shall cleave to his Wife: and they twain shall be one flesh?

(a) St. John iv. 5 and 43.

(b) St. Mark x. 1.

(c) St. Mark x. 1.

(d) Jerome.

These words therefore are to be regarded as the utterance of God; though, as they stand in the Book of Genesis, (e) they seem to have been actually spoken by Adam. (f) Doubtless, (as St. Polycarp is thought to have remarked,) our first Father spake prophetically,—the Spirit of God moving him to deliver words the full import of which would not be seen for four thousand years.—Our SAVIOUR here republishes the Law of Nature; and sets God's earlier decree, against the permission which was afterwards given in consequence of the hardness of men's hearts. Concerning the form of the expression, the Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark x. 7.

"When He had thus brought forward the words and facts of the old Law, He then interprets with authority, and lays down a Law, saying,"—

6 wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.

"He brings in God yet again; showing that it is both against Nature and God's Law to put away a wife: against Nature,—because 'one flesh' is therein divided: against Law,—because God hath joined and forbidden to sunder them." (g)

7 They say unto Him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away?

Referring to the precept found in Deuteronomy xxiv. 1, 2.—Our LORD explains that this was only in consequence of "that stubborn disposition which made them incapable of obeying a purer and more perfect law."

8 He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your Wives: but from the beginning it was not so.

Such was the excuse made by CHRIST, in His unspeakable Wisdom, for His ancient Servant. "By this, He clears Moses from their charge, and retorts it all upon their own head." To protect a despised Wife from the cruelty of an unfaithful Husband, Moses had "*suffered*" (not "*commanded*,") that she should be "put away:" "but from the beginning, it was not so."

9 And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his Wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery:

Whereby He not only repeals the permission given by Moses, but delivers a new Law with the authority of a Lawgiver: "*I say unto you*,"—as in the Sermon on the Mount. (h) The circumstance was remarkable; and accordingly obtains special notice from the Apostle, when he is treating of such matters. (i)—"It is fornication alone which destroys the relationship of the Wife; for when she has divided one flesh into two, and has separated herself by fornication from her Husband, she is not to be retained." (k)

and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.

"He says this to the terror of him that would take her to wife; for the Adulteress would have no fear of disgrace." Doubtless this entire sentence concerning Divorce was peculiarly unpalatable to the unholy men who came "tempting Him." Consider St. Luke xvi. 14 and 18.

10 His Disciples say unto Him, If the case of the Man be so with *his* Wife, it is not good to marry.

A very strange rejoinder, surely! Had then the Jewish heart become so depraved and hardened that the thought of Marriage without the privilege of Divorce, was intolerable! Truly, the Disciples herein showed that they partook of the general blindness which had befallen their nation.

(e) Gen. ii. 23, 24.

(g) Chrysostom.

(i) See 1 Cor. vii. 10, 11.

(f) Consider Acts xxviii. 25. Heb. i. 8: iv. 4, &c.

(h) See St. Matthew vii. 29, and the note there.

(k) Jerome.

11 But He said unto them, All *men* cannot receive this saying, save *they* to whom it is given.

That is,—To remain unmarried, is a precept which cannot be acted upon by all; “but only by those to whom the power of abstaining from marriage is given.” “Every man,” (says the Apostle,) “hath his proper gift of God,—one after *this* manner, and another after *that*.” (l)

Our LORD proceeds to mention three different ways by which men might have the power before alluded to,—namely, by nature; or by violence; or by choice.

12 For there are some eunuchs, which were so born from *their* mother’s womb: and there are some eunuchs, which were made eunuchs of men: and there be eunuchs, which have made themselves eunuchs for the Kingdom of Heaven’s sake.

That is, “Which have denied themselves the liberty of marriage, in order to be enabled thereby to denote themselves more entirely to the service of God.” (m)—Then, with reference to “the saying” spoken of in verse 11, our SAVIOUR adds,—

He that is able to receive *it*, let him receive *it*.

“The meaning is, Whosoever hath the power, however given him, of living without marriage, let him use that power if it seem good to him. These are words of permission, not of command.” (n) According to the heading of the chapter,—our LORD “showeth when Marriage is necessary.”

The narrative proceeds with what seems like a beautiful continuation of the same subject.

13 Then were there brought unto Him little Children, that He should put *His* Hands on them, and pray: and the Disciples rebuked them.

The desire that our LORD would “put His Hands on them, and pray,” (that is, that He would *bless* them,) (o) may have arisen out of his commendation of little Children recorded in the former chapter. (p)

14, 15 But JESUS said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto Me: for of such is the Kingdom of Heaven. And He laid *His* Hands on them, and departed thence.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark x. 13 to 16, for several remarks on this incident.—CHRIST had now “gone forth into the way.” (q)

16 And, behold, one came and said unto Him, Good Master, what good thing shall I do, that I may have Eternal Life?

St. Mark says he “came *running*.” But he addressed our LORD as if He were a mere man. CHRIST therefore answers him as if He were indeed no more.

17 And He said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God*: but if thou wilt enter into life, keep the Commandments.

That is, “If thou *desirest* to enter into Life.”

18 He saith unto Him, Which?

The young Ruler evidently supposed that our SAVIOUR spoke of some great and strange thing, when He bade him “keep the Commandments.” And so, indeed, He did; though the other had not the eyes to see it.

(l) 1 Cor. vii. 7. See also what follows.

(m) Archdeacon Hale and Bp. Lonsdale,—referring to 1 Cor. vii. 32 to 35.

(n) See 1 Cor. vii. 7.—The quotation is from the source last referred to.

(o) Consider St. Mark x. 16.—This was done with Imposition of Hands. See Gen. xlviii. 13, 14, 17, 18.

(p) See St. Matthew xviii. 2 to 5.

(q) St. Mark x. 17.

19 JESUS said, Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy Father and *thy* Mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Our LORD alluded to nothing new. He reminds him of the sixth, seventh, eighth, ninth, and fifth; omitting only the tenth. "And if there be any other Commandment," (writes the Apostle,) "it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." (r)

But *why* did our LORD omit the *tenth* Commandment? Was it not because *Covetousness* was the one thing which was keeping this young Ruler from CHRIST; and which virtually prevented him from obeying the invitation in verse 21?

20, 21 The young man saith unto Him, All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet? JESUS said unto him,

How kindly the words which follow were spoken, may be inferred from St. Mark's statement that JESUS "beholding him, *loved him*." (s) It is to be supposed from this very circumstance that there was much of good in this young man; but the reply we have just heard from his lips recalls painfully the remonstrance of the elder son in the parable,—“Neither transgressed I at any time Thy Commandments.” (t) He even adds, “What lack I yet?” and “knows not that he is wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.” (u) . . . “JESUS” therefore said unto him,—

If thou wilt be perfect, go *and* sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come *and* follow Me.

But how was this to make him “perfect?” “Perhaps it may be that such an effort of Faith, capable of overcoming the great besetting sin, would carry him through all lesser temptations. Add to which, that our LORD's words must be taken in connection. ‘Give to the poor,’ He says; and ‘Follow Me.’ This is surely Evangelical Perfection. The first is the love of Man; the second is the love of God with all the heart. And in this, is the true and spiritual fulfillment of all the Commandments.”

Nor must it be forgotten that “when CHRIST calls it ‘*perfection*’ to sell all and give to the poor, He speaks according to the idiom of the Jewish nation, which thought it so: and He does but try whether this rich man, boasting of his exact performance of the Law, would aspire to that ‘*perfection*’ which his countrymen so praised.” (x)

22 But when the Young Man heard that saying, he went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions.

Our LORD had laid His finger on the one weak point in this young man's character. He was loving and chaste, honest and true, dutiful also to parents; yet had he made an idol of his great Wealth. He was a servant of Mammon, and therefore could not serve God. (y) How does the great Apostle seem to write of such as he, where he says,—“The love of money is the root of all evil: which while some coveted after, they have erred from the faith, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.” (z) On all that precedes, see also the notes on St. Mark x. 17 to 22.

23 Then said JESUS unto His Disciples, Verily I say unto you, That a Rich Man shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

It follows in St. Mark's Gospel,—“And the Disciples were astonished at His words. But JESUS answereth again, and saith unto them, Children, how hard is it for them that *trust in riches* to enter into the Kingdom of God!” (a) It is *nearly* one and the same thing therefore, *to have riches*, and *to trust in them*. Which

(r) Romans xiii. 10,—quoting Levit. xix. 18.

(t) St. Luke xv. 29.

(y) St. Matth. vi. 24; and the notes on St. Mark x. 24.

(z) 1 Tim. vi. 10.

(s) St. Mark x. 21: where see the note.

(u) Rev. iii. 17.

(x) Lightfoot.

(a) St. Mark x. 24.

startling assertion, so far from revoking, or even softening down, our LORD delivers "again," and in yet stronger language:—

24 And again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a Rich Man to enter into the Kingdom of God.

This is a strong proverbial expression, denoting something which is *impossible*. Consider below, verse 26. "Strait is the gate, and narrow is the way," in the case of *all*: but to the rich man it becomes so straitened, so narrowed, as to become like the eye of a needle. He also moves slowly, (like the camel,) for he carries an unwieldy burthen.

25, 26 When His Disciples heard *it*, they were exceedingly amazed, saying, Who then can be saved? But JESUS beheld *them*, and said unto them, With men this is impossible; but with GOD all things are possible.

Our LORD looked earnestly upon his Apostles as He said this; and if Judas did not feel the power of His look, it must have been because he turned away his eyes to avoid it.

Their question showed how deeply they had entered into the meaning of their LORD's words. They understood that the "rich" of whom He spake were not merely the *rich in possessions*, but the *rich in desires*, the *lovers of riches*,—whether they had them, or had them not. Thus then, out of a deeply painful sense of the difficulty of being *really* poor, they asked with amazement, "*Who* then can be saved?" (*b*)

On all that precedes, see the notes on St. Mark x. 17 to 27; and on St. Luke xviii. 27.

27 Then answered Peter and said unto Him, Behold, we have forsaken all, and followed Thee; what shall we have therefore?

Simon, seeing the young Ruler depart, "very sorrowful: for he was very rich," (*c*) asked this question,—surely not one which the maturer Saint would have approved! Yet, note the gracious answer:

28 And JESUS said unto them, Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed Me, in the Regeneration when the Son of Man shall sit in the Throne of His Glory, ye also shall sit upon Twelve Thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.

He says not "Ye twelve;" but "*Ye which have followed Me*," (*d*)—thereby excluding Judas. The "sitting upon thrones" denotes that the Apostles should reign with CHRIST, and share His glory: and it is promised that they should "judge the twelve tribes of Israel," because they, the twelve heads of the spiritual Israel, would, by their Faith in MESSIAH, condemn the unbelief of the nation which had formally rejected Him.

All this is to be "in the Regeneration:" that is, at the end of the World,—when "the Heavens, being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat;" "the Earth also, and the works that are therein shall be burned up;" (*e*) and God will create "*new Heavens and a new Earth*." (*f*)

Nay, we ourselves, at the sound of the Archangel's trump, shall be raised incorruptible, and *be changed*. It will be the *Regeneration* therefore; the birth-pangs of Nature will have been felt, (*g*) and forgotten: (*h*) "old things will have passed away; behold *all things will have become new*." (*i*)

Into so awful a subject as Judgment to come, it is safest not to pry curiously. We know nothing more than hath been revealed, nor can know. The magnificent

(*b*) Augustine, referred to by Trench.

(*c*) St. Luke xviii. 23.

(*d*) And see St. Luke xxii. 28.

(*e*) 2 St. Peter iii. 10, 12, 13.

(*f*) Compare Isaiah lvi. 17: lxvi. 22.

Rev. xxi. 1, 27.

(*g*) St. Matth. xxiv. 8, (where see the note): Rom. viii. 22.

(*h*) St. John xvi. 21

(*i*) 2 Cor. v. 17.

outlines traced in such passages as the present by the Hand of CHRIST Himself ("the Judge of all") (*k*) may well content us. It shall suffice further to remind ourselves of that exclamation,—“Know ye not that we shall judge Angels?” (*l*) to point out that it proceeded from one who, though not numbered with the Twelve, was not behind the very chiefest Apostles;” (*m*) and to suggest, with the greatest of the Fathers, that “in the number of Judges, therefore, are included as many as have left their all to follow CHRIST.” (*n*)

29 And every one that hath forsaken Houses, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for My Name's sake, shall receive an hundred-fold, and shall inherit Everlasting Life.

See on St. Mark x. 30, and on St. Luke xviii. 30.

30 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last *shall be* first.

Our Blessed LORD may be considered to have used this saying three times; namely, in St. Luke xiii. 30,—here (*o*)—and in the 16th verse of the ensuing chapter. For though, at first sight, these two latter instances might be considered to reckon as only one,—occurring as they do, the one at the beginning, the other at the end, of the parable of the Laborers in the Vineyard,—yet, on closer examination, it will be perhaps found that they are by no means to be certainly so regarded. On either occasion, the proverb seems to have a distinct meaning; and we are reminded here, (as so often elsewhere,) that our LORD's words are like those precious stones which possess the singular property of presenting a different colour according to the different position in which they are displayed. The saying in question, which is very nearly repeated in chap. xx. 16, must doubtless be viewed on either occasion by the light of the sayings which go before it; and these are, (at least they seem to be,) very different.

When the proverb occurs in the next chapter, it seems to mean that the last hired shall fare like the first, and the first hired like the last. (*p*) But in this place it seems unmistakably to have a somewhat different application. It sounds like a note of solemn warning. The proverb here, seems, in fact, to fulfill the same office which it fulfills in St. Luke xiii. 30: namely, to convey a caution, (*much needed, no doubt, by us all*), against supposing that the estimation in which men are now held will of course prevail hereafter. Was Judas Iscariot the only one who from being “first” became “last?” or was Lazarus (in the parable) the only one who, from being last, became first?—It seems scarcely a bold suggestion that, after St. Peter's inquiry,—“What shall we,” (that is, we Twelve Apostles,) “have therefore?” (*q*) and the promise about the twelve thrones, which follows,—our LORD should have added this word of warning with a special eye to the Traitor Judas,—being “one of the Twelve.” (*r*)

The saying in question therefore, may perhaps be thus paraphrased:—

But beware how ye, who were the first to be hired into My Vineyard, presume thereupon; as if entitled to a higher reward, from having endured a greater share of heat and fatigue. As many as I shall call, to the end of the World, are destined to enter into one and the same state of Bliss. Nay, beware how ye build your hopes of future Happiness, at all, on your present privileges; and let as many as shall come after you, beware also. My promises are wholly conditional. When I come in the Evening of the World to reckon with My Servants, many of those who were first called, and occupied the first place in this Life, will find themselves thrust down into the lowest room; while those who were called latest, and regarded as least, will be exalted to the highest honors. (*s*)

Then follows a Parable, which seems to have special reference to *the time* when men are sent into the LORD's Vineyard. See the note on verse 16 of the ensuing chapter.

(*k*) Heb. xii. 23.

(*l*) 1 Cor. vi. 2, 3.

(*m*) 2 Cor. xi. 5.

(*n*) Augustine.

(*o*) Parallel to St. Mark x. 31.

(*p*) See the note on St. Matt. xx. 16.

(*q*) St. Matt. xix. 27.

(*r*) St. Matthew xxvi. 47. St. Mark xi. 10, &c. See above the note on ver. 26; also on St. Matthew xxii. 12.

(*s*) See the note on the last part of St. Luke xviii. 14.

CHAPTER XX.

1 CHRIST, by the similitude of the Labourers in the Vineyard, sheweth that God is debtor unto no man. 17 Fortelleth His Passion. 20 By answering the Mother of Zebedee's Children, teacheth His Disciples to be lowly: 30 and giveth two blind men their sight.

THE parable of the Labourers in the Vineyard, with which this chapter begins, seems at first sight one of the easiest of the parables; yet, on examination, it proves to be one of the hardest, if not the very hardest of all. The truth is, that while the narrative is of the simplest kind, its application is by no means obvious; even with the help which our Blessed Lord has Himself supplied in the short proverbial sentence with which it concludes.

Nearly the same saying goes immediately before the parable, if it was not actually meant to preface and introduce it; and the circumstance is far too remarkable to be overlooked. It is "as if it were intended that, by the Moral of it being thus given twice, at its beginning and again at its end, all who read or hear it should be sure of seeing and understanding the lesson which CHRIST meant that it should teach." (a) By the light of that saying, then ("a lamp shining in a dark place," (b) as St. Peter speaks,) let us study the parable. The words alluded to, and which conclude St. Matthew's 19th chapter, are these: "Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."

FOR the Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a Man that is an householder, which went out early in the morning to hire labourers into His Vineyard.

Who the Householder was, who, "as soon as it was day," went out to hire labourers into His Vineyard, scarcely requires telling. But the remark so often brought before us, is again recalled,—that God loves under the image of an Husbandman to speak of Himself in His dealings with mankind. (c) The "Vineyard" is the Church,—as our Lord Himself hath shown by more than one parable. (d) His Disciples were familiar with this image from the writings of their ancient Prophets. (e)

2 And when He had agreed with the labourers for a penny a day, He sent them into His Vineyard.

The Roman *Denarius* is spoken of, being in value about eightpence of our money. "Everlasting Life" (f) doubtless intended thereby,—the common reward of all who have wrought in the Vineyard; of all, that is, who have served God faithfully in their generation.

3 And He went out about the third hour, and saw others standing idle in the market-place.

That is, the place of general concourse and public resort. As contrasted with the Vineyard, which represents the Church, the Market-place must stand for the World.

(a) Rev. W. Jacobson, D. D.

(c) See the note on St. Luke iii. 17.

(e) Is. v. 1 to 7. Jer. xii. 10. Ps. lxxx. 8 to 15.

(f) St. Matth. xix. 29: St. Mark x. 30: St. Luke xviii. 30.

(b) 2 St. Peter i. 19.

(d) See St. Matth. xxi. 33 to 43.

4, 5 And said unto them; Go ye also into the Vineyard, and whatsoever is right I will give you. And they went their way. Again He went out about the sixth and ninth hour, and did likewise.

He entered into covenant with those whom He hired at six in the morning. The labourers whom He hired at 9, at 12, and at 3, left Him to decide what their reward should be; and verily they found, at evening, that they had been serving a most bounteous Master.—It wanted only one hour to sunset when He went forth for the last time:—

6, 7 And about the eleventh hour He went out, and found others standing idle, and saith unto them, Why stand ye here all the day idle? They say unto Him, Because no man hath hired us. He saith unto them, Go ye also into the Vineyard; and whatsoever is right, *that* shall ye receive.

From this part of the Transaction, the “eleventh hour” has passed into the ordinary language of mankind! It seems to have been generally assumed that the parable is of individual application; and that the close of a man's life, is the “eleventh hour” of which CHRIST speaks.

But since the Parable teaches that they who were hired at the eleventh hour received exactly the same reward as those who sustained the whole burden and heat of the day,—the further belief has arisen that provided a man does but bestir himself, at however late a period of his life, he will prove equally blessed in the end, with the most faithful of God's servants.—It may seem scarcely worth while to advert gravely to a notion like this,—vaguely held, at best, and maintained seriously by none but the very weak or the very wicked: yet it is to be feared that such notions are more widely spread, have taken deeper root, and are wont to influence conduct more fatally than is generally believed.

Let it be pointed out therefore, that whatever truth there may be in the proposed application of the Parable, the condition of bestowing the penny at the close of the day, must never be lost sight of. The excuse of those who were found standing idle at the eleventh hour, was, that *No man had hired them*. They were doing nothing, only because they had nothing to do. Let none therefore who begin to labour at the eleventh hour, presume to look for *the reward* of the labourers in the Parable, unless they are able to offer *their excuse* also. And how can that excuse find a place on the lips of *any* living in a Christian land? . . . But to return:—

8 So when even was come, the Lord of the Vineyard saith unto His Steward, Call the labourers, and give them *their* hire, beginning from the last unto the first.

“Last” and “first:”—those words evidently supply the key-note of the entire discourse. So in verses 10, 12, and 14.—CHRIST is “the Steward” set over God's Household.

The labourers are paid *at evening*, according to the law that “the wages of him that is hired should not abide” with his employer “all night until the morning.”(g) And judgment will come in like manner, at the end of the World.

9, 10 And when they came that *were hired* about the eleventh hour, they received every man a penny. But when the first came, they supposed that they should have received more; and they likewise received every man a penny.

The first hired seem to have approached the Steward with thoughts like those of Simon Peter in ver. 27 of the preceding chapter,—“Behold, *we* have done such and such things: what shall *we* have therefore?” But there the resemblance ceases. “The labourers received every man a penny.”

11, 12 And when they had received *it*, they murmured against the

goodman of the house, saying, These last have wrought *but* one hour, and thou hast made them equal unto us, which have borne the burden and heat of the day.

The very terms of their complaint reveal their unworthiness. They are displeased at finding "these last" "made equal" unto themselves: they magnify their toil: they even "murmur against the Goodman of the House." Their conduct recalls the behaviour of the elder son in the parable of "the Prodigal." Indeed the two parables present some striking points of resemblance. What follows is not unlike the Father's reply to the elder Son's remonstrance:—

13, 14, 15 But He answered one of them, and said, Friend, I do thee no wrong: didst not thou agree with Me for a penny? Take *that* thine *is*, and go thy way: I will give unto this last, even as unto thee. Is it not lawful for Me to do what I will with mine own? Is thine eye evil, because I am good?

That is, Dost thou look upon me with a jealous and an evil eye, because I am bountiful to others, and just to thyself?—Whereby, as the heading of this chapter states,—“CHRIST sheweth that God is debtor unto no man.”

The parable having thus been brought to a close, the Divine Speaker is graciously pleased to subjoin a sentence which declares the drift of His mysterious teaching: on which, see St. Matthew xix. 30.

16 So the last shall be first, and the first last: for many be called, but few chosen.

And yet, when the parable is considered, no such *inference* as this readily presents itself. “The first” and “the last” have not exchanged places,—as the proverb seems to imply, and it is probably actually intended to imply on the other two occasions when our LORD employs it. Still less have any that were “called” not been “chosen;” for *all* have been rewarded, and all have been rewarded alike. We are compelled therefore to add a few words in order to remind ourselves of what seems actually to have been His precious meaning: namely,—that, in respect of Everlasting Life, the last shall be [rewarded like the] first, and the first [like the] last. Or, yet more briefly, that “The last shall be [as the] first, and the first [as the] last.” For,—(according to that saying, “Many be called, but few chosen,”)—the result shall falsify the expectation. Many who deem themselves favored with a special call, will find in the end that they are not chosen to the exalted privilege which they promised themselves.

Out of this, however, arise many hard questions. We are tempted to inquire, Did our LORD then deliver the parable simply to teach *that*? What bearing can such a lesson be supposed to have on the Discourse which preceded? Above all, Is it then really so, that *the same reward* will be to all alike? Will Abraham and Moses, will St. John and St. Peter, drink no fuller cup than he who was assured of pardon on the cross, (at “the eleventh hour,” as we say,) or any other accepted sinner mentioned in the Gospel? It is said elsewhere that “one star *differe*th from another star in glory.”^(h)

Further difficulties also present themselves. Is the parable of national, or of individual application? What is meant by the several hours of the day? And how does it happen that *all* the labourers are rewarded?

Satisfactorily to solve so many difficulties is evidently a hopeless task: but most of them admit of a sufficient answer. The Parable must be taken in connection with the four concluding verses of the former chapter; and, (as already explained in the note on St. Matthew xix. 30,) it seems to have been designed, in the first instance, to repress any proud thoughts which the promise of “twelve thrones” might have excited in the Apostles: showing that the last hired shall be as the first; and the first as the last. The reward is *one*.

But a reward, though one and the same *in itself*, is not therefore one and the same to those who receive it. Meat and drink are a great gift to the hungry and thirsty: to those who neither hunger nor thirst, meat and drink afford small gratification.

"Truly the Light is sweet, and a pleasant thing it is for the eyes to behold the Sun:"(*i*) but only if they be in a healthy state. The Light is torture to an eye diseased. Every pleasure, in short, is greater or less according to a man's capacity for enjoying it: and "if the vision of God constitute the blessedness of Heaven, then, they whose spiritual eye is most enlightened will drink in most of His Glory." In the meantime, "what the Lord said to Abraham, He says to all—"I am thy exceeding great reward;" and He has no other reward to impart to any save this, namely *Himself*."(*k*)

Concerning the application of the Parable, it seems safer to suppose that it may have at once a national and an individual bearing. Viewed in the former aspect, the Jews will be "the first;" those, namely, with whom a covenant was made, who were hired "early in the morning," and sent into the Vineyard:(*l*) and the disposition shown in verses 11 and 12, (where see the note,) well accords with what we know of the temper of that remarkable people.(*m*) The Parable would therefore set forth the same general lesson which is conveyed by the preference so often given to the younger son over the elder.(*n*) The ultimate acceptance of the Gentiles, and their admission to equal privileges with Israel, is here prophetically shown.

Considered as of personal and private application, it may be thought that the divisions of the Day alluded to, are periods of Human Life: in which case, Timothy,—who "from a child knew the Holy Scriptures,"(*o*) and had been nursed in the Faith of the Gospel,(*p*)—would be an example of one hired early; while the Repentant Malefactor is the best example which presents itself of one hired "at the eleventh hour." And the blessed assurance will then be conveyed that a converted and baptized Heathen, however advanced in years, if he does but faithfully perform His Master's work while yet it is day, cherishes a well grounded hope of entering hereafter into perfect Bliss. Remember however what was said above, on verse 7.

But a more obvious *individual* bearing of the Parable is suggested by the context. The object seems to have been rather to discourage presumptuous hopes in the Apostles. They had been hired early; but they were not therefore to presume. The same everlasting portion awaited all who should ever be hired into the Vineyard of their Lord, even to the end of the World. And this, if we may humbly offer an opinion, seems to be the true scope and intention of the Parable.

Lastly,—as for *all* the Labourers obtaining a reward,—it really need not create perplexity. The present Parable evidently differs from those which contrast the end of the wicked and of the righteous. *Labourers entitled to reward* are supposed throughout. We must beware of inventing difficulties; or even going out of our way to discover them, when they are foreign to the main scope of our Lord's Discourse. Thus, the murmuring of those hired early, is a feature of the narrative which probably ought not to be pressed. It cannot be thought to exhibit a feeling which finds place in Heaven. Rather is it a lively way of expressing the anticipations of living men with respect to the Life to come. And finally, since so little is said about those who were hired at the third, the sixth, and the ninth hour, neither surely need *we* make much of them either. Our attention is specially invited only to "the first" hired and "the last;" and a short sentence both at the beginning and the end of the Parable, conveys a warning respecting these, which, as it concerned the Apostles, so doubtless will it concern the Church of CHRIST to keep steadily in view, to the end of Time.

17 And JESUS going up to Jerusalem.

For the *last* time during His earthly Ministry,—

18, 19 took the Twelve Disciples apart in the way, and said unto them, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be betrayed unto the Chief Priests and unto the Scribes, and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver him to the Gentiles to mock, and to scourge, and to crucify *Him*: and the third day He shall rise again.

The "spiteful entreatment,"—the very "spitting on,"—is mentioned in the other Gospels.(*q*) See on this subject the note on St. Mark x. 34.

(*i*) Eccl. xi. 7.

(*l*) Consider St. Matth. xxi. 28 to 31, &c.

(*m*) See the note on St. Luke xv. 32.

(*p*) 2 Tim. i. 5.

(*k*) Trench on the Parables.

(*n*) Consider Acts xxii. 21, 22, &c.

(*o*) 2 Tim. iii. 15.

(*q*) See St. Mark x. 34, and St. Luke xviii. 32.

20 Then came to Him the Mother of Zebedee's children with her Son's, worshipping *Him*, and desiring a certain thing of Him.

Our LORD's recent allusion to the *Thrones* which the Twelve were destined hereafter to occupy(r) probably led to this remarkable incident; which shows with what ambitious thoughts His followers were filled at this time.(s) Salome,(t)—whose husband Zebedee was probably now dead, (since she is called "the Mother of the sons of Zebedee,")—brought her two sons James and John to CHRIST.

21 And He said unto her, What wilt thou? She saith unto Him, Grant that these my two sons may sit, the one on Thy Right Hand, and the other on the Left, in Thy Kingdom.

Her sons urged the same petition; whence our LORD addresses His reply to *them*:

22 But JESUS answered and said, Ye know not what ye ask. Are ye able to drink of the Cup that I shall drink of, and to be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with?

Implying that the place of highest honour is reserved for those who have been "made conformable to His Death."(u) Hence St. Paul declares it to be "a faithful saying;"—"If we *suffer*, we shall also *reign* with Him."(x) "'The Cup' and 'the Baptism' are said with reference to the Two Sacraments by which we are, through His Passion, made one with CHRIST."(y)

They say unto him, We are able.

"When the Mother stood with her sons beholding CHRIST on the Cross, she better understood what it would be to be on His Right Hand, and on His Left, in His Kingdom,"—says a pious writer.

23 And He saith unto them, Ye shall drink indeed of My Cup, and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with: but to sit on My Right Hand, and on My Left, is not Mine to give, but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared of My FATHER.

Rather—"Not Mine to give, save [to them] for whom it is prepared." . . . But what a wonderful statement is that which goes before; namely, that St. John and St. James were to drink indeed of CHRIST's Cup of Suffering, and to share His Baptism of Blood! It might have been expected from this, that a bloody martyrdom awaited both Brothers; yet are their histories, on the contrary, remarkably contrasted. St. James fell at once by the sword,(z)—the first of the Apostolic Body to suffer, or indeed, to die. St. John survived all the Apostles, and died a natural death, (it is thought,) in extreme old age. This declaration of our SAVIOUR proves therefore, (as St. Polycarp is thought to have remarked long since,) that the Martyr's crown may be earned by those who have been Martyrs in *will* though not in *deed*: by those who have suffered long, and silently; who have distributed the bitterness of their Master's cup over years of banishment, persecution, and distress; and whom He has caused to share His Baptism of Blood, by methods known only to Himself—and *them*.

24 And when the ten heard *it*, they were moved with indignation against the two Brethren.

"For the ambition of one creates envy in others who partake of the same feeling."

25, 26 But JESUS called them *unto Him*, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them. But it shall not be so among you:

(r) See St. Matth. xix. 28.

(s) Consider St. Matth. xix. 27. St. Mark ix. 33, 34.

(t) Compare St. Matth. xxvii. 56, and St. Mark xv. 40.

(u) Phil. iii. 10.

(x) 2 Tim. ii. 12.

(y) Williams.

(z) Acts xii. 2.

"That is, not content to rule over their subjects, they are severe and oppressive. But among you, who are mine, these things shall not so be." (a)

27, 28 but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister; and whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant: even as the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a ransom for many.

"Men become masters in this world, that they may reduce their inferiors to slavery, and empty them for their own profit and glory. But men become governors in the Church, that they may serve those who are under them; minister to them whatever they have received of CHRIST; and not refuse even to die for their sake," (b) if need so require.

The Reader will find the saying in verses 26, 27, repeated in chap. xxiii. 11. The sentiment has already been met with in St. Mark ix. 35,—where see the note. "How much soever you humble yourself," (says Chrysostom,) "you cannot descend so far as did your LORD."

29, 30 And as they departed from Jericho, a great multitude followed Him. And, behold, two blind men sitting by the way side, when they heard that JESUS passed by, cried out, saying, Have mercy on us, O LORD, *Thou* Son of David.

St. Mark mentions only one of them,—whose name was Bartimæus, (c) and who was doubtless the more conspicuous of the two. Somewhat remarkable it may be thought that, on a previous occasion also, two blind men followed our SAVIOUR with the same cry, and were healed in the same manner as now,—namely, by a touch. (d) We make their petition our own, as often as we repeat the suffrages at the end of the Litany. (e)

31 And the multitude rebuked them, because they should hold their peace: but they cried the more, saying, Have mercy on us, O LORD, *Thou* Son of David.

Such are the hinderances which will be sometimes thrown in the way of those who desire to come to CHRIST. See on St. Luke xviii. 39, 40.

32, 33 And JESUS stood still, and called them, and said, What will ye that I shall do unto you? They say unto him, LORD, that our eyes may be opened.

"JESUS, therefore, (the same who said 'To him that knocketh it shall be opened,') stands still, touches them, and gives them sight." As it follows,

34 So JESUS had compassion *on them*, and touched their eyes: and immediately their eyes received sight, and they followed Him.

"They followed Him;" perhaps all the way to Jerusalem,—and there availed themselves of their recovered powers to behold the most wondrous spectacle which ever Men or Angels looked upon.

Concerning this miracle, the Reader may think it worth while to refer to what has been offered in the places referred to at the foot of the page. (f)

(a) Origen.

(b) Pseudo Chrysostom.

(c) St. Mark x. 46.

(d) St. Matth. ix. 27, 29.

(e) The Reader is referred to the note on St. Matth. ix. 27.

(f) On St. Mark x. 46 to 52, and St. Luke xviii. 35 to 43.

CHAPTER XXI.

1 CHRIST rideth into Jerusalem upon an ass. 12 Driveth the buyers and sellers out of the Temple. 17 Curseth the Fig-tree. 23 Putteth to silence the Priests and Elders. 28 And rebuketh them by the similitude of the two Sons. 35 And the Husbandmen, who slew such as were sent unto them.

OUR LORD, having journeyed along the wild mountain road(*a*) which conducts from Jericho to Jerusalem,—followed by a large multitude of persons, among whom was “blind Bartimæus,” whom He had so lately restored to sight,—at last reaches the district, east of Jerusalem, to which the name of Bethphage and Bethany was assigned. The Mount of Olives begins at that place. Accordingly, it is said,—

1, 2 And when they drew nigh unto Jerusalem, and were come to Bethphage, unto the Mount of Olives, then sent JESUS two Disciples, saying unto them, Go into the village over against you, and straightway ye shall find an ass tied, and a colt with her: loose *them*, and bring *them* unto Me.

Everything begins to teem with mysterious import. Not without a reason, be sure, does St. Matthew, (addressing his Gospel especially to the Jews, lay stress upon the Ass, as well as her Colt, which our SAVIOUR now required. He was about to enter His Capital; and He saw fit to do so, “meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass;”(b) the former, representing the Jewish Nation, which had long borne a yoke: the latter, the Gentiles,—wild as yet and unbroken, “whereon never man sat.”(c) “For the Jewish nation is spiritually the Mother of the Gentiles.”(d)

The sending of the Apostles is, in itself, a significant circumstance. CHRIST called the Gentiles by the ministration of His servants,—who *brought* them to Him. He proceeds, in this place, to give the two Disciples their commission.

3 And if any man say aught unto you, ye shall say, The LORD hath need of them; and straightway he will send them.

Not “*Our* Lord,” or “*Your* Lord,” but “*The* LORD:”—He who is supreme over all Creation, to whom all things belong, and whom all things serve; *He* “hath need of them.”

4, 5 All this was done, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the Prophet, saying, Tell ye the daughter of Sion, Behold, thy King cometh unto thee, meek, and sitting upon an ass, and a colt the foal of an ass.

The Prophet here quoted is Zechariah—ix. 9; but the first six words are from Isaiah lxii. 11. In Zechariah, the passage begins, “Rejoice greatly, O Daughter of Sion; shout, O Daughter of Jerusalem:” which jubilant words cannot have been changed for others by the SPIRIT, without a profound reason,—whether imparted to the Evangelist or not.

It has been beautifully remarked,(e) that “as our LORD is now coming as King,

(a) See the note prefixed to St. Mark xi.

(c) St. Mark xi. 2, and St. Luke xix. 30.

(b) See below, ver. 5.

(d) Jerome.

(e) By Williams.

and to claim His Kingdom, *that* one of His attributes is selected from Prophecy, to which alone of the Beatitudes the promise of an earthly inheritance is attached: "Thy King cometh unto thee, *meek*." His subjects are they to whom He has said, "Learn of Me, for I am *meek*:"^(f) and these shall reign with Him; for it is written, "Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the Earth."^(g)

Here then was an act which, while it fulfilled prophecy, was in itself prophetic. Chrysostom observes, "It is not merely on account of the mystery," however, "that our LORD rode on the ass; but in order to afford us a lesson of Humility."

6, 7 And the Disciples went, and did as JESUS commanded them, and brought the ass, and the colt,

The ass and her colt came together. It was on the colt, (not on the ass,) that CHRIST rode, (for it was *the Gentiles* who were now about to submit to the easy yoke and light burden of CHRIST;) but the disciples brought both the ass and her colt; as *both ships* were needed at the second miraculous draught of fishes.^(h)

8 and put on them their clothes, and they set *Him* thereon. And a very great multitude spread their garments in the way; others cut down branches from the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

Some remarks on these verses will be found in the notes on St. Mark xi. 7 and 8. The people are found to receive CHRIST coming to the Feast of the Passover, with a solemnity which belonged to the Feast of Tabernacles.

9 And the multitudes that went before, and that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; blessed *is* he that cometh in the name of the LORD; Hosanna in the highest.

It is St. Matthew who alone mentions that the people shouted "Hosanna" (that is, "Save now") "*to the Son of David*;" as he is the Evangelist who specially records our LORD's descent from that Monarch. In the fulness of their rapture, they poured forth a sentence from the 118th Psalm, verses 25 and 26. All the latter part of that Psalm, in fact, seems descriptive of our LORD's coming. See what is written on this subject in the notes on St. Mark.

"Hosanna *in the highest*," is explained by the language of the 148th Psalm:—"Praise Him in the heights: praise ye Him, all His Angels: praise ye Him, all His hosts." With which may be compared the language of the Angelic Hymn,—"*Glory to God in the highest*."⁽ⁱ⁾ Indeed, St. Luke says that the multitude, on this very occasion, cried (as the Angels did on the Night of the Nativity,) "*Glory in the highest*."^(k)

10 And when He was come into Jerusalem, all the City was moved, saying, Who is this?

"Who is this King of Glory?" is also the cry of wonder when He enters the Heavenly Jerusalem. So remarks an ancient Father,^(l) alluding to the language of one of the Psalms used on Ascension-Day."^(m)

11 And the multitude said, This is JESUS the Prophet of Nazareth of Galilee.

So effectually did the prophecy that He should "be called a Nazarene" find fulfilment. It has been already pointed out that the name of His Mother's City followed Him from the cradle to the grave.⁽ⁿ⁾

12 And JESUS went into the Temple of GOD, and cast out all them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves,

"Among all the miracles wrought by our LORD," (says an ancient Father,) "this

(f) St. Matth. xi. 29.

(i) St. Luke ii. 14.

(n) Psalm xxiv. 8, 10.

(g) St. Matth. v. 5.

(h) St. Luke xix. 38.

(n) See the note on St. John i. 45.

(k) St. Luke v. 7.

(l) Origen.

seems to me the most wonderful; that one man, so humble in His worldly estate, and while the Scribes and Pharisees were exasperated against Him by seeing their gains thus cut off, was able to cast out such a multitude. Surely a flame darted from His eyes, and the majesty of the Godhead was radiant in His countenance!"(o) It will be remembered, that this was the *second* cleansing of the Temple effected by our Lord. The first, marked the beginning of His Ministry:(p) the present occasion marks its close. By the recurrence of so striking and significant a transaction we are reminded that, (like "the dream which was doubled unto Pharaoh twice," "the thing was established by GOD."(q) Besides its mystical import, elsewhere noticed,(r) the act was symbolic of one purpose of CHRIST's coming; namely, to purge away iniquity from His Church and people. He came "suddenly to His Temple," as had been foretold; and by the alarm He inspired, set forth in type the terrors of that Second Advent to which the Church directs the eyes of her children, and concerning which the prophet had written,—“But who may abide the Day of His Coming? and who shall stand when He appeareth?”(s) . . . The Reader will find more on this great subject in the note on St. John iii. 15, to which he is referred.

St. Mark adds here, that CHRIST “would not suffer that any man should carry any vessel through the Temple:”(t)

13 and said unto them, It is written, My House shall be called the House of Prayer; but ye have made it a den of thieves.

Concerning these quotations from the ancient prophets,(u) the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark xi. 16.

14 And the Blind and the Lame came to Him in the Temple; and He healed them.

Most significant, truly, is this exquisite record. These were indeed the days of MESSIAH, of which it had been written—“Then the eyes of the Blind shall be opened: then shall the Lame man leap as an hart.”(x) The eyes were opened “in the Temple,” (that is, in the Church,) “to see the way;”(y) and there, also, were the feet made strong that they might walk therein. “Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy Law.”(z) “Show me Thy ways, O Lord; teach me Thy paths:”(a) “cause me to know the way wherein I should walk.”(b) “I will run the way of Thy Commandments when Thou hast set my heart at liberty.”(c) . . . By such symbolic language did the Law anticipate the Gospel: and by such symbolic acts does the Gospel interpret the Law!

Consider how many acts of Divine Power are hinted at, not described, in this short verse.

15, 16 And when the Chief Priests and Scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the Children crying in the Temple, and saying, Hosanna to the Son of David; they were sore displeased, and said unto Him, Hearest Thou what these say?

These Children, who had perhaps caught up the sound of the acclamations they had already heard,(d) “were regardless of the frown of the Pharisees: for their simplicity of heart gave them a courage which many weak believers, more advanced in age, had not; and inspired them to do what others would not have dared.” Thus were little Children at first, His martyrs;(e) next, the pattern which He set before His Church;(f) and now, at last, they are heard singing His praises in the Temple. “His own Priests are silent, or only break silence to blaspheme His Name; but little children cry ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ Over His own

(o) Jerome,—who seems to be recollecting what he had read in Origen.

(p) See St. John ii. 14, 15; and the notes there.

(r) See the note on St. Mark xi. 16.

(t) St. Mark xi. 16.

(x) Isaiah xxxv. 5, 6.

(z) Ps. cxix. 18.

(c) Ps. cxix. 32.

(f) First in St. Matth. xviii. 1 to 4. Next in St. Mark x. 13 to 16.

(q) Genesis xli. 32.

(s) Malachi iii. 2.

(u) Isaiah lvi. 7, and Jeremiah vii. 11.

(y) Acts ix. 2 (see the margin): xix. 9, 23, &c.

(a) Ps. xxv. 4.

(b) Ps. cxliii. 8.

(d) See above, verse 9.

(e) St. Matth. ii. 16.

people He weeps, but with these babes He rejoices. Even the women, He bids to 'lament for themselves;' but He encourages the little Children to rejoice."(*g*)

And JESUS saith unto them, Yea; have ye never read, Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise?

"I suppose," (says an ancient Writer,) "that they who praised, knew not what they praised; but the SPIRIT, who suddenly inspired them, poured forth the words of Truth." This seems indeed to have been the case. Consider St. Matthew xi. 25. The quotation is from Psalm viii. 2; by adducing which, our LORD seems to say, "Be it so. It is it My fault that these cry thus. But is it my fault that, a thousand years ago, the Prophet foretold that so it should be?"(*h*) Take notice that in directing the attention of His enemies to that beautiful Psalm, the Holy One referred them to one of the most glorious declarations in Prophecy, of His own entire dominion over all created beings in Heaven and Earth.(*i*)

17 And He left them, and went out of the city into Bethany; and He lodged there.

"Seeking, surely, to rest His Body where His Spirit also found repose. For so it is with all holy men: they love to be, not where sumptuous banquets are, but where Holiness abounds."(*k*)

To retire to Bethany seems to have been the practice of our Divine LORD on every Evening during the Holy Week.(*l*) The blessed Company may have withdrawn first, to the garden of Gethsemane,(*m*) which lay at the foot of the Mount of Olives; and thence proceeded to the village of Bethany, which lay, at the distance of about half an hour, on the other side of the Mount.(*n*)

An ancient writer says,—"It is to be understood that our LORD was in so great poverty, and so far from having courted any one, that He had found in all Jerusalem neither entertainer nor abode; but He made His home at Bethany, in the house of Lazarus and his sisters."(*o*)

18, 19 Now in the morning as He returned into the City, He hungered. And when He saw a Fig tree in the way, He came to it, and found nothing thereon, but leaves only; and He said unto it, Let no fruit grow on thee henceforward for ever. And presently the Fig tree withered away.

The Evangelist is relating an incident which *had* happened on the previous morning,—Monday. What follows, belongs to the History of Tuesday.

Concerning the highly symbolic character of this Transaction, no doubt can be entertained. It has been elsewhere shown to relate to the fortunes of the Jewish nation; with whom CHRIST found leaves only,—the tokens of fruit, which yet was wholly wanting,—and whose Day of Grace had now hopelessly passed away. The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark xi. 12 to 14, for some remarks on this subject.

20 And when the Disciples saw *it*, they marvelled, saying, How soon is the Fig tree withered away!

This exclamation, then, the Apostles uttered on the next morning, when they beheld the fulfillment of the sentence pronounced the day before on the Fig tree. Or rather, it is a question. They ask inquiringly,—"How is it that the Fig tree has immediately withered away?"

The Reader who is struck with the strangeness of the turn which the present transaction takes in the ensuing verses, is referred to a remark on the subject, in the note on St. Mark xi. 23.

21 JESUS answered and said unto them, Verily I say unto you, If

(*g*) Williams.

(*h*) Pseudo Chrysostom.

(*i*) Consider Hebrews ii. 6 to 8.

(*k*) Pseudo Chrysostom.

(*l*) St. Matth. xxi. 17; St. Mark xi. 11, &c.

(*m*) St. John xviii. 2. Compare St. Luke xxi. 37, and xxii. 39.

(*n*) St. John xi. 18.

(*o*) Jerome.

ye have faith, and doubt not, ye shall not only do this *which is done* to the Fig tree, but also if ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; it shall be done.

22 And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.

This must be a weighty saying, for we have already met with it in St. Matthew's Gospel: *(p)* and, (with a slight difference,) in St. Luke's also. *(q)* When our Lord said "this Mountain," He may be supposed to have pointed to the Mount of Olives, along the side of which He was proceeding. It has been remarked that, from these verses, "we learn that Prayer, as well as Faith, was necessary even for the Apostles, in order to the full exercise of their miraculous powers. Consider St. Matthew xvii. 19 to 21." *(r)*

23, 24, 25 And when He was come into the Temple, and the Chief Priests and the Elders of the people came unto Him as He was teaching, and said, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority? And JESUS answered and said unto them, I also will ask you one thing, which if ye tell Me, I in likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things. The Baptism of John, whence was it? from heaven, or of men?

Some remarks on what precedes will be found in the notes on St. Mark xi. 28 and 30.

26, 27 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From Heaven; He will say unto us, Why did ye not believe him; but if we shall say, Of men; we fear the people: for all hold John as a prophet. And they answered JESUS, and said, We cannot tell. And He said unto them, Neither tell I you by what authority I do these things.

Take notice that they *could* tell, but *would* not. Our Lord puts His answer into the shape which theirs would have assumed, had they spoken the Truth.

He proceeds to deliver three parables in succession,—the first and third of which are peculiar to the present Gospel. The two last are highly prophetic; but all three contain a solemn warning. It will be observed that the first is closed with a short question, to which it was impossible for the enemies of CHRIST to return the answer, "We cannot tell."

28 But what think ye? A *certain* Man had two Sons; and he came to the first, and said, Son, go work to-day in my Vineyard.

We are evidently hearing of the same Father whose sons' conduct forms the subject of the parable related in St. Luke xv. *(s)* His "Vineyard" we have also heard of before,—as in the preceding chapter, *(t)* and in St. Luke xiii. 6: and it receives conspicuous mention lower down, in verse 33. It is here explained to mean "the Kingdom of Heaven," *(u)* as *that* Kingdom begins here on Earth.

"To 'work in the Vineyard' is to do Righteousness. To cultivate the whole thereof, no man is sufficient." *(x)*

29, 30 He answered and said, I will not: but afterward he repented, and went. And he came to the second, and said likewise. And he answered and said, I *go*, Sir: and went not.

Observe the contrast between the very style of their answers. "I will not,"—is not only undutiful but rude: "I go, Sir,"—sounds not only dutiful, but even very respectful.

(p) St. Matth. xvii. 20.

(s) See St. Luke xv. 11.

(q) St. Luke xvii. 6.

(t) St. Matth. xx. 1.

(x) Jerome.

(r) Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(u) See below, verse 31.

31 Whether of them twain did the will of *his* father? They say unto Him, The first.

It is reasonable to suppose that the present parable is fairly capable of a national and prophetic application. The Gentiles had refused at first to work in the Lord's Vineyard: but already they had repented, and were prepared to go. God's chosen people made abundant professions,^(y) but did no *work*. This however is certainly not the immediate purpose and tendency of our SAVIOUR'S words.

These "two Sons" stand for two different classes among the Jews. "The Publicans and harlots"^(z) represent "the first" Son: the Pharisees were specimens of "the second." The Publicans and harlots by their wicked, dissolute lives, in reply to God's invitation that they would serve Him, had plainly said that they "would not." The Pharisees, by their fair professions, and lip-service,^(a) had as plainly declared their readiness to work. They were men, however, who "said, and did not."^(b) Wherefore, as it follows,—

32 JESUS saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, That the publicans and the harlots go into the Kingdom of God before you. For John came unto you in the way of Righteousness, and ye believed him not: but the publicans and the harlots believed him: and ye, when ye had seen *it*, repented not afterward, that ye might believe him.

Thus then, our LORD Himself in part explains His own parable: at least, He here informs us whom He intended by the "Two Sons." But, (as usual,) His application of His own words is strange and unexpected. The Baptist's summons, the Pharisees obeyed *not*: but the Publicans and harlots *did* obey it. Thus the Divine Speaker *reverses* the characters He has been hitherto portraying: and instead of reproaching his assailants with their wickedness in saying "We go, Sir," and yet failing to go,—He bids them mark the contrast which their characters and conduct had respectively presented. The Publicans and harlots, when the Baptist invited them to walk in the way of Righteousness, had said "We go, Sir,"—*and they had actually gone*. But the Pharisees, who, (like "the first" son in the Parable,) had said "We will not," failed to imitate that son in *his repentance* likewise. Nay, though they "had seen" the obedience of the others, they "*repented not afterward!*"

33 Hear another parable: There was a certain Householder, which planted a Vineyard, and hedged it round about, and digged a wine-press in it, and built a tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country:

The owner of a Vineyard was careful to encircle his property with "a hedge," (which probably denotes a stone wall;) the object being not so much to prevent "those that pass by the way" from "plucking," as to protect the fruit from the incursions of foxes,^(c) and of wild boars.^(d) The "wine-press" was placed above the "wine-fat,"^(e)—which consisted of a pit dug in the earth and lined with masonry, or hewn out of the solid rock. The "Tower" was for protection. He who dwelt there was expected to keep watch over the Vineyard.

Concerning the mystical interpretation of the present parable, the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark xii. 1 to 8. God of course is the Husbandman, and His Church is the Vineyard, "and the men of Judah His pleasant plant."

34, 35 And when the time of the fruit drew near, he sent his servants to the husbandmen, that they might receive the fruits of it. And the husbandmen took his servants, and beat one, and killed another, and stoned another.

(y) Consider Exodus xxiv. 3 and 7.

(a) See Isaiah xxix. 13.

(c) Song of Solomon ii. 15.

(z) See below, verse 32.

(b) St. Matthew xxiii. 3.

(d) Psalm lxxx. 13.

(e) St. Mark xii. 1.

They beat one,—as Jeremiah :(*f*) and stoned another,—as Zechariah the son of Jehoiada. (*g*)

36 Again, he sent other servants more than the first; and they did unto them likewise.

Very apposite is the language of the Old Testament itself to the transactions here related in the way of parable. "I sent unto you" (says the Great Householder), "all My Servants the Prophets, rising early and sending them, saying, Oh do not this abominable thing that I hate."(*h*) "Nevertheless," (exclaims a righteous member of the same nation,) "they were disobedient and rebelled against Thee, and cast Thy Law behind their backs, and slew Thy Prophets which testified against them to turn them to Thee: and they wrought great provocations."(*i*)

37 But last of all he sent unto them his Son, saying, They will reverence my Son.

This is said, not with reference to God's Foreknowledge, but to Man's Free-will. God declares hereby what *ought* to be. Men *ought* to have revered His Son.

38, 39, 40, 41, 42 But when the husbandmen saw the Son, they said among themselves, This is the Heir; come, let us kill him, and let us seize on his inheritance. And they caught him, and cast *him* out of the Vineyard, and slew *him*. When the Lord therefore of the Vineyard cometh, what will he do unto those husbandmen? They say unto him, He will miserably destroy those wicked men, and will let out *his* Vineyard unto other husbandmen, which shall render him the fruits in their seasons. JESUS saith unto them, Did ye never read in the Scriptures, The Stone which the builders rejected, the same is become the head of the corner: this is the LORD'S doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

He asks them whether they had never read the Prophecy concerning MESSIAH in Psalm cxviii.—where He is spoken of as a Stone, which was rejected indeed by the Builders, (even as the Heir of the Vineyard was rejected by the Husbandmen,) but which became "the Head of the corner." By His further reference to Isaiah, (in verse 44,) He teaches them that utter destruction will prove the consequence of their wicked conduct. See more in the note on St. Mark xii. 11.

43 Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of GOD shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof.

"In their Seasons,"—as those miserable men, uttering a terrible prophecy against themselves, had truly spoken. (*k*) Namely, at Advent, Watchfulness and Prayer; at Epiphany, Faith: Humiliation and Repentance during Lent: Newness of Life at Easter: and all "the Fruit of the SPIRIT" (*l*) at Whitsuntide.

44 And whosoever shall fall on this Stone shall be broken: but on whomsoever It shall fall, It will grind him to powder.

That is,—*He* shall experience sore injury to whomsoever the Doctrine of CHRIST crucified proves "a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence." To reject Him, is to be broken. But the man on whom CHRIST, after years of long-suffering patience, shall execute judgment, will be utterly destroyed thereby; will become "like the chaff of the summer threshing-floors." (*m*)

Our Lord's allusion in the first words of verse 44, to what is written in Isaiah viii. 15, is unmistakable. (*n*) The latter part of the sentence recalls an ancient

(*f*) Jer. xx. 1 to 6, &c.

(*g*) 2 Chron. xxiv. 20, 21.

(*h*) Jer. xlv. 4.

(*i*) Neh. ix. 26,—quoted by Trench. See also Dan. ix. 6, 10, &c.

(*k*) See above, ver. 41.

(*l*) Gal. v. 22, 23.

(*m*) Dan. ii. 35.

(*n*) A remarkable portion of prophecy, truly; for, from Is. viii. 12 to 18, there are no less than five places quoted or referred to in distinct places of the New Testament, viz. 1 St. Peter iii. 14, 15: Rom. ix. 33 and 1 St. Peter ii. 8: Heb. ii. 13, (two quotations); and the present place.

Greek proverb :—"The mill-stones of Heaven grind the corn slowly ; but they grind it to very powder."

45, 46 And when the Chief Priests and Pharisees had heard His parables, they perceived that He spake of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitude, because they took Him for a Prophet.

Accordingly, "they left Him and went their way:"(o) but in what a temper and disposition of mind, the subsequent History best shows. They thirsted for His blood ; and gladly accepted the offer of Judas to betray Him into their hands "in the absence of the multitude."(p)

THE PRAYER.

FROM all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion ; from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism ; from hardness of heart, and contempt of Thy Word and Commandment, Good LORD, deliver us.

CHAPTER XXII.

1 *The Parable of the Marriage of the King's Son.* 9 *The vocation of the Gentiles.* 12 *The punishment of him that wanted the wedding garment.* 15 *Tribute ought to be paid to Caesar.* 23 *CHRIST confuteth the Sadducees for the Resurrection.* 34 *Answereth the Lawyer, which is the first and great commandment.* 41 *And poseth the Pharisees about the MESSIAS.*

THE Parable of "the Marriage of the King's Son," with which the present chapter commences, and which is peculiar to St. Matthew's Gospel, bears considerable resemblance to the parable of "the Great Supper," which is related by St. Luke.(a) The parables are however wholly distinct. The key-note to what follows is supplied by verse 43 of the former chapter.

1, 2, 3 And JESUS answered and spake unto them again by parables, and said, The Kingdom of Heaven is like unto a certain King, which made a marriage for His Son ; and sent forth His servants to call them that were bidden to the wedding : and they would not come.

It is quite evident that God is the "King" here spoken of. The "Marriage which He made for His SON," can be none other than that espousal of the Church to CHRIST(b) which is discoursed of from the beginning of Genesis(c) to the end of Revelation ;(d) and of which Marriage itself is but a type or symbol.(e) The Pro-

(o) St. Mark xii. 12.

(p) St. Luke xxii. 6.

(a) St. Luke xiv. 16 to 24.

(b) See the note on St. John ii. 1.

(c) Gen. ii. 24, compared with 1 Cor. vi. 16, and Eph. v. 31.

(d) Rev. xxii. 17.

(e) As the Church twice asserts in her Marriage Service.

phets, generally, will be the servants "sent forth to call them that were bidden" (that is, the Jewish nation,) "to the wedding." Take notice, that they are sent "to call *them that were called*:" the very form of the expression implying that the invitation had been made, all along, to the Jews: that they, from the beginning, had been "*called to be saints*." (f)

4 Again, He sent forth other servants, saying, Tell them which are bidden, Behold, I have prepared My Dinner: My oxen and *My* fatlings *are* killed, and all things *are* ready: come unto the Marriage.

The terms in which the invitation is conveyed remind us that a splendid Festival is spoken of; and one which lasted many days. This must be borne in mind, or the parable will be scarcely intelligible. Such festivals anciently attended great marriages; and the figure has this special fitness, that convivial notions were mixed up in the minds of the Jews with the coming of MESSIAH'S Kingdom. (g) Our LORD Himself will be found to have employed a kindred image when discoursing on the same subject. (h)

When the Apostles were sent forth, and commanded to "preach, saying, The Kingdom of Heaven is at hand," (i)—what did they say in effect but, "I have prepared My Dinner; all things are ready: come unto the Marriage?" They, in fact, (and those sent by them,) are the "other servants" here spoken of; for CHRIST had come into the World,—the great Victim had been slain, (k)—and all was now ready! Whence, the difference between the terms of the message in verses 3 and 4. We may, however, if we please, consider St. John Baptist, the Twelve, and the Seventy as the Servants first sent; and all who have preached the Gospel since the sacrifice of the Death of CHRIST, as intended by the "other servants."

Either way, there is truth in the remark of a pious living Writer, that this Parable "extends beyond the other parables delivered on the same occasion, into deeper manifestations of God's wonderful Mercy. For, in the last parable, (that of "the Vineyard,") He sent His Servants again and again to be slain, and then His Sox. But here, when His Sox is killed also, He sends forth to say that His Dinner is prepared: that His choicest victims and fatlings are killed. Instead of destroying them for their wickedness, He calls them to a Feast, (to feed on His Sox whom they had killed!) but they refuse to come. Nor is this all; but they evil entreat and kill His servants also." (l) See more, below, in the note on verse 8. It follows,—

5 But they made light of *it*, and went their ways, one to his farm, another to his merchandise:

They do not make polite excuses, as in the Parable of "the Great Supper,"—a parable distinct from this indeed, yet bearing so strong a resemblance to it. (m) That may be because the other parable was delivered at an earlier period of our LORD'S Ministry, when the outward show at least of civil bearing was maintained towards the Gospel message. Take notice that while St. Luke's parable is the Gospel for the Second Sunday after Trinity, the present parable is accordingly reserved till eighteen Sundays later.

6 and the remnant took His servants, and entreated *them* spitefully, and slew *them*.

If the terms in which the invitation was conveyed, (in verse 4,) as well as the manner in which it was received, (as related in verse 5,) recall the Parable of "the Great Supper" in St. Luke's Gospel, (n) scarcely less forcibly is the parable of "the Vineyard let out to Husbandmen" brought to our remembrance by the verse which precedes and that which follows. (o) It may indeed seem an extraordinary way of showing unwillingness to come to a festival, thus to maltreat the servants who bring the invitation: yet does the very monstrousness of the course pursued

(f) Rom. i. 7.

(h) See St. Matth. viii. 11; St. Luke xxii. 30.

(k) See the note on St. Luke xv. 23. And consider Isaiah xxv. 6,—the "mountain" being "the mountain of the LORD'S House." See Isaiah ii. 2, 3.

(l) Williams.

(n) See St. Luke xiv. 17, 18, 19.

(g) St. Luke xiv. 15.

(i) St. Matth. x. 7.

(m) See St. Luke xiv. 18, 19, 20.

(o) See St. Matth. xxi. 35 and 41.

but set forth the more truly "the monstrous fact, that men did so maltreat and slay the messengers of God's grace, the ambassadors of CHRIST, who came to them with glad tidings of good things."(*p*)

7 But when the King heard *thereof*, He was wroth: and He sent forth His armies, and destroyed those murderers, and burned up their City.

The meaning is obvious. "By 'His armies' we understand the Romans under Vespasian and Titus, who, having slaughtered the inhabitants of Judæa, laid in ashes the faithless city."(*q*) By which interpretation, we do not, of course, exclude those "legions of angels"(*r*) which "the LORD of Hosts" has ever at command, and which effectually do His bidding. This then is a remarkable example of Prophecy contained in Parable.

8 Then saith He to His servants, the Wedding is ready, but they which were bidden were not worthy.

Notice the continued prophetic character of the present Parable; and the further development it contains of the Divine Mercy, which was noticed above in the last note on verse 4.

The declaration of Paul and Barnabas, addressing the Jews of Antioch in Pisidia, is here brought to mind:—"It was necessary that the Word of God should first have been spoken to you; but seeing ye put it from you, and judge yourselves *unworthy* of everlasting Life, lo, we turn to the Gentiles: for so hath the LORD commanded us."(*s*)

9, 10 Go ye therefore into the highways, and as many as ye shall find, bid to the Marriage. So those servants went out into the highways, and gathered together all as many as they found, both bad and good: and the Wedding was furnished with guests.

"Be it known . . . that the Salvation of God is sent unto the Gentiles, and *they will hear it.*"(*t*)

Take notice that the guests which were "gathered," are said to have been "as many as they found; *both bad and good.*" This brings to mind some remarks which were offered in the note on St. Matthew xiii. 26, concerning the mixed aspect which the Church now presents. It prepares the mind also for the incident which follows; and which forms, in fact, *the second part* of the Parable.(*u*) We have heard till now of the Rejection of the Feast. It remains that we hear the fate of the Unworthy Guest.

11, 12 And when the King came in to see the guests, He saw there a man which had not on a wedding garment: and He saith unto him, Friend, how camest thou in hither not having a wedding garment?

"He calls him 'Friend,' because He had invited him to the wedding; but He charges Him with want of manners in polluting by his filthy dress the elegance of the wedding entertainment."(*x*)

The King of Kings comes in to examine His guests, (that is, "those who sit at His Table,"¹) at all times; but it may be thought that He comes in a special manner on certain great occasions,—as on Festival Days, during Sacred Seasons, and at the Services of the Sanctuary generally. Our Church accordingly, in one of her Exhortations to the Holy Communion, requires her Children "so to search and examine their own consciences that they may come holy and clean to such a heavenly feast *in the marriage garment required by GOD in Holy Scripture.*" And indeed the reference to the Holy Eucharist is so obvious, that we almost *assume* it, in reading the parable.—Take notice that only *one* person, out of the entire assem-

(*p*) Trench. (*q*) Jerome. See St. Matth. xxiv. 2: St. Luke xxi. 6, and the notes there.

(*r*) St. Matthew xxvi. 53. (*s*) Acts xiii. 46, 47.

(*t*) Acts xxviii. 28.

(*u*) See the heading of the chapter. The parable of "the Prodigal Son" consists, in like manner, of two parts. See the note on St. Luke xv. 25.

(*x*) Jerome. Consider Zephaniah i. 7, 8.

blage, is supposed unworthy,—perhaps in order to bring the matter treated of, at once home to the breast of every man. “*LORD is it I?*” Judas asked the question afterwards. May it not have been the special intention of his merciful LORD that the Traitor should have asked the question *now*?

We need not dispute concerning the meaning of the “wedding garment:” attempting to decide whether it be Charity,*(y)* or Humility,*(z)* or any other Christian grace in particular. It is an expression the propriety of which all must feel. CHRIST says by Revelation to the Angel of the Church of Laodicea, “I counsel thee to *buy of Me . . . white raiment*, that thou mayest be clothed, and that the shame of thy nakedness do not appear.”*(a)* And the Elder, in reply to his own inquiry, “what are these which are arrayed in white robes?” makes answer,—“These are they which . . . have washed their robes, and made them white *in the blood of the LAMB.*”*(b)* To “*put on CHRIST,*”*(c)* “to be found in Him, not having our own Righteousness, which is of the Law, but that which is through the Faith of CHRIST, the Righteousness which is of God by Faith;”*(d)*—such expressions seem purposely set on record in order to make the general teaching of the text unmistakable.

But, besides its reference to this World, there is an evident allusion in this part of the parable to the Final Judgment; and it may be thought that what follows particularly favours such an interpretation. Notice first, the effect which CHRIST’s question has on the offender:

And he was speechless.

The Sinner, arraigned before the Bar of God, finds himself without excuse. He is stricken dumb,—and by his very silence, condemns himself. The Angels*(e)* are straightway called upon to execute the sentence of the Righteous Judge:

13 Then said the King to the servants, Bind him hand and foot, and take him away, and cast *him* into outer darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

With “hand,” “foot,” and “eye,” men chiefly offend:*(f)* wherefore the sinner is not only bound “hand and foot,” but consigned to “darkness” also. The Reader will find the rest of the verse discussed already in the notes on St. Matthew viii. 11, 12.

14 For many are called, but few *are* chosen.

This saying has come before us already; namely, at the close of the parable of “the Labourers in the Vineyard:” but the remark which it elicited on that occasion is not altogether applicable to it here.*(g)* We may observe however that, in both places, it seems to apply only in a broad and general way to what goes before.

15, 16, 17 Then went the Pharisees, and took counsel how they might entangle Him in *His* talk. And they sent out unto Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, Master, we know that Thou art true, and teachest the Way of GOD in truth, neither carest Thou for any *man*: for Thou regardest not the person of men. Tell us therefore, What thinkest Thou? Is it lawful to give tribute unto Caesar, or not?

The Pharisees and the Herodians, then, conspire for this accursed purpose. It is worth observing that these sects held opposite tenets in respect of the particular question which they here bring before our LORD. The Pharisees held the very calling of a Publican in abhorrence; calling by the name of *Sinners**(h)* as many as farmed the revenue. Very hateful, therefore, in their eyes was the payment of

(y) Col. iii. 12.

(z) 1 St. Peter v. 5.

(a) Rev. iii. 18.

(b) Rev. vii. 13, 14. Consider, further, iii. 4, 5; iv. 4; vi. 11; vii. 9, &c.

(c) Gal. iii. 27. See Rom. xiii. 14, Eph. iv. 24, Col. iii. 10.

(d) Phil. iii. 9.

(e) Consider St. Matthew xiii. 41, 49.

(f) Consider St. Mark ix. 43, 45, 46; and see the note on the place. “If *my step* hath turned out of the way,” (says righteous Job,) “and mine heart walked after *mine eyes*, and if any blot hath cleaved to *mine hands*,” Job xxxi. 7.

(g) See the note on St. Matth. xx. 16.

(h) St. Luke xix. 7. And see St. Mark ii. 15.

tribute to Cæsar. Not so the Herodians; concerning whom, we know little indeed; except that they were adherents of Herod,⁽ⁱ⁾ and, as such, must have been mainly concerned to uphold the Roman dominion in Judæa, to which the family of Herod, alien by descent, was indebted for the maintenance of its power and authority. That these two opposite sects should have united on this occasion, as both St. Matthew and St. Mark^(k) relate, need produce no surprise. The Gospel supplies other examples of the same thing.^(l) "Our LORD's triumphant entry into Jerusalem a few days before, as the Son of David, and His daily wonders, had exasperated and alarmed them both; and led them eagerly to seek that destruction, which they soon after succeeded in accomplishing. And it was expedient for their hateful object, that persons who took opposite sides on this particular question should appear to be concerned in propounding it: for the intention was, either way, to turn the answer to our LORD's prejudice."^(m) See the note on St. Luke xx. 22.

18, 19, 20, 21 But JESUS perceived their wickedness, and said, Why tempt ye Me, *ye hypocrites?* show Me the tribute money. And they brought unto Him a penny. And He saith unto them, Whose *is* this image and superscription? They say unto Him, Cæsar's. Then saith He unto them, Render therefore unto Cæsar the things which are Cæsar's; and unto GOD the things that are GOD's.

22 When they had heard *these words*, they marvelled, and left Him, and went their way.

Several remarks will be found on this entire incident in the Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel.⁽ⁿ⁾ Our LORD's next assailants are the unbelieving Sadducees; who are found to experience far gentler treatment than their rivals at His hands.

23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 The same day came to Him the Sadducees, which say that there is no Resurrection, and asked Him, saying, Master, Moses said, If a man die, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother. Now there were with us seven brethren: and the first, when he had married a wife, deceased, and, having no issue, left his wife unto his brother: likewise the second also, and the third, unto the seventh. And last of all the woman died also. Therefore in the Resurrection whose wife shall she be of the seven? for they all had her.

29 JESUS answered and said unto them, Ye do err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor the power of GOD.

For to *quote* the Scriptures is not to *know* them.

30, 31, 32 For in the Resurrection they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the Angels of GOD in Heaven. But as touching the Resurrection of the dead, have ye not read that which was spoken unto you by GOD, saying, I am the GOD of Abraham, and the GOD of Isaac, and the GOD of Jacob? GOD is not the GOD of the dead, but of the living.

33 And when the multitude heard *this*, they were astonished at His Doctrine.

This highly instructive incident will be found discussed at considerable length in the notes on St. Mark's Gospel:^(o) the Reader is therefore requested to refer to that portion of the Commentary. It may be useful to point out that this is *the only* place in the Gospel where the Sadducees are related to have addressed a question to our LORD: though they are elsewhere found to have demanded of Him "a sign

(i) See the note on St. Mark iii. 6.

(k) St. Mark xii. 13.

(l) See note on St. Matth. xvi. 1.

(m) Dr. W. H. Mill.

(n) St. Luke xx. 20 to 25.

(o) See the notes on St. Mark xii. 18 to 27.

from Heaven.^(p) After the Resurrection, however, the Sadducees are found to have been the principal enemies of the Religion of CHRIST.^(q)

With reference to the Discourse which precedes, a pious Writer says—"And now, having kindled in us the desire of Eternal and Angelic Life, our LORD proceeds to point out the way to attain it,—by Love. Thus the contentions of men serve to bring forth the truths of the Kingdom; and from out these discordant elements does our LORD mould the harmonious perfections of His New Temple 'not made with hands.'"^(r)

34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39 But when the Pharisees had heard that He had put the Sadducees to silence, they were gathered together. Then one of them, *which was* a Lawyer, asked *Him a question*, tempting Him, and saying, Master, which *is* the great commandment in the Law? JESUS said unto him, Thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind. This is the first and great commandment. And the second *is* like unto it, Thou shalt love thy Neighbour as thyself.

"Seems it not rather a *contrary* commandment? Whereas in the former, the whole stream of LOVE is directed in one undivided current towards God, this second commandment seems to cut out a new channel for it, and to turn a great part of it to men; 'thy neighbour as thyself.' No, they are not contrary, if we take them right: yea, they do not only agree, but are inseparable. They do not divide our love, but set it in its right course: first, wholly to God, as the sovereign good; and then, back from Him, according to His own Will, it is derived downwards to our neighbour. For then only do we love both ourselves and others aright, when we make our love to Him the reason and rule of both. So then, our love is not to be divided between Him and our Neighbour, or any creature: but is first to be bestowed on Him; and then He diffuses, by way of reflection, so much upon others as He thinks fit. Being all in His hands, it is at His disposal; and that which He disposes elsewhere, (as here, 'Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself,') it is not taken off from Him, but abiding still in Him, as in its natural place, flows forth from Him as beams flow forth from the sun and enlighten the air; and yet are not cut off from it.

"So then, the second is like unto the first, because it springs from it, and depends upon it. It commands the same affection: love, in the former, placed on God,—and in this, extended from Him to our Neighbour. And it is like unto it in this, too: that, as the former is the sum of the first Table, and so the first and great Commandment; so, this is the sum of the second Table, and therefore next unto it in greatness and importance."^(s)

40 On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.

"From these two Commandments are derived all the particulars of duty to God and Man, taught in the Law of Moses, and by the Prophets who have enforced that Law."^(t)

The Reader will find several remarks on this question of the Lawyer or Scribe, who belonged to the sect of the Pharisees, in the Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel; to which he is referred.^(u)

41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46 While the Pharisees were gathered together, JESUS asked them, saying, What think ye of CHRIST? whose Son is He? They say unto Him, *The Son* of David. He saith unto them, How then doth David in spirit call Him LORD; saying, The LORD said unto my LORD, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool? If David then call Him LORD, how is He his Son? And no man was able to answer Him a word: neither durst any *man* from that day forth ask Him any more *questions*.

(p) St. Matth. xvi. 1.

(q) See Acts iv. 1: v. 17, 24, &c.

(r) Williams.

(s) Apb. Leighton.

(t) Archd. Hale and Ep. Lonsdale.

(u) See the notes on St. Mark xii. 28 to 34.

"From whence it is evident," (remarks Bishop Pearson,) "that the Jews of old, even the Pharisees, the most accurate and skilful amongst them, did interpret this Psalm(x) of the MESSIAS: for if they had conceived the Prophecy belonged either to Abraham, or David, or any other, they doubtless would have answered our SAVIOUR that this belonged not to the Son of David."

The concluding portion of the present chapter, which occurs in all the three Gospels, will be found fully commented on in the notes on St. Luke's Gospel; whither the Reader is referred.(y)

CHAPTER XXIII.

1 CHRIST *admonisheth the people to follow the good doctrine, not the evil examples, of the Scribes and Pharisees.* 5 *His Disciples must beware of their ambition.* 13 *He denounceth eight woes against their hypocrisy and blindness.* 34 *And prophesieth of the destruction of Jerusalem.*

To read the Discourse contained in the ensuing chapter with profit, the circumstances under which it was delivered should be borne in mind. In the chapters which immediately precede, we have seen our LORD refuting His assailants,—Chief Priests and Elders, Pharisees and Herodians, Sadducees and Scribes. At last, He silenced them with a hard question. "No man was able to answer Him a word; neither durst any man from that day forth ask Him any more questions."(a) But "the common people heard Him gladly."(b)

At such a juncture,—speaking in the audience of the Pharisees, His own Disciples, and the multitude,—we feel that nothing of ordinary interest *could* have proceeded from the lips of the Divine Speaker. It was the closing scene of His public Ministry. He was ready to be sacrificed in three days. He had borne with the contradiction of sinners long enough; and was no longer obliged, as heretofore, to consult for His own personal safety. He was about to be withdrawn from the eyes of that multitude also, which had hitherto hung delighted on His words;(c) and which may well have desired to be informed by Him how they were henceforth to think of their Teachers, and of Him. Verily, He did not keep them long in suspense, or send them away, finally, in doubt! Hear Him; and consider how "the Scribes and Pharisees" must have quailed beneath the withering denunciations which follow, and which their own monstrous wickedness had drawn down upon their heads! Is it possible, however, to read the present chapter, and not to feel that its warnings (like so many in the Gospel,) are addressed to the Church of CHRIST for ever; and especially to *the Teachers* of Religion,—the successors of those who "sat in Moses' seat?"

1, 2, 3 Then spake JESUS to the multitude and to His Disciples, saying, The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat: all therefore whatsoever they bid you observe, *that* observe and do;

To "sit in Moses' seat," is to expound with authority the Law of Moses. By these words, our SAVIOUR eternally exhorts and rebukes as many as make the unworthiness of their Teacher a pretext for their own neglect: "in the greatness of His wisdom and foresight requiring His Church to look to the seat of authority, whatever may be the character of those who occupy it."(d)

(x) Ps. cx. 1.

(y) See the note on St. Luke xx. 40 to 44.

(a) St. Matth. xxii. 46.

(b) St. Mark xii. 37.

(c) See the note on St. Luke xix. 48.

(d) Williams.

But when it is considered on whose lips those words are found, as well as to whom they were addressed, they will be perceived to contain besides, a striking intimation of the entire agreement which subsists between the Law and the Gospel. On another occasion, our SAVIOUR declared that He had "not come to destroy" the Law, "but to fulfil"(e) it; and accordingly He is here found to enjoin upon His Disciples obedience to whatsoever the Scribes and Pharisees bade them observe. This must have been because coming from one and the same Divine Author, the spiritual intent of the Law and the Gospel was the same, though the letter was so different. Consider Romans ii. 28, 29.

but do not ye after their works: for they say, and do not.

"What can be more pitiable," (asks an old Writer,)(f) "than a Teacher, to imitate whom is ruin,—to refuse to follow whom, is salvation?" . . . Our SAVIOUR proceeds to explain what He means when He says of the Scribes and Pharisees that "they say, and do not."

4 For they bind heavy burdens and grievous to be borne, and lay *them* on men's shoulders; but they *themselves* will not move them with one of their fingers.

That is, "they exact without any allowance the utmost rigour of Life from those that are put under them, while they allow themselves unbounded license: the very reverse of which should be the practice of the good Ruler,—namely, to be to himself a severe judge, to others a merciful one."(g) To "bind burdens," is to gather traditions from every side; whereby to burden the conscience, and to make the "yoke" of the Law(h) unbearable. See the note on St. Luke xi. 46, where these words are found repeated: and consider the contrast between what these men taught, and the "easy yoke" and "light burden" of our SAVIOUR CHRIST.(i)

5 But all their works they do for to be seen of men:

This is the sinful temper against which our LORD especially warns us in that part of his Sermon on the Mount, where he gives directions concerning Almsgiving, Fasting, and Prayer. Not that the desire of human praise is sinful in itself:(k) but it is a grievous Sin, when human applause is made the end and object of actions which are professedly done to the honour of God. Consider St. Matthew vi. 1, 2, 5, 16, 17, 18, and the notes thereon.

they make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments,

"Phylactery" is a Greek word,—denoting "a preservative:" showing that those two parchment labels which the Jews wore, one on their wrist, the other on their forehead, in obedience to the strict letter of God's command,(l) and inscribed with a sentence of the Law,—were regarded in the light of amulets, charms, or spells. The Pharisees,—wholly overlooking the spiritual intention of the precept referred to, and which obviously was, that God's Law should be the rule of every action, the subject of meditation, day and night,(m)—made their phylacteries unusually broad and visible, in order to win for themselves a higher reputation for piety with the people.

That command of the Law will further be remembered, by which it was ordained that the children of Israel should "make them fringes in the borders of their garments, . . . and put upon the fringe of the borders a ribband of blue:" the intention being that they might "look upon it, and remember all the commandments of the LORD, and do them."(n) Such a "fringe" and "ribband of blue" we have already had occasion to notice as worn on the outer garment of the SAVIOUR.(o) It was not the wearing of this, therefore, which our LORD condemned; but the en-

(c) St. Matthew v. 17, 18.

(f) Origen.

(g) Chrysostom.

(h) Acts xv. 10.

(i) St. Matth. xi. 30.

(k) For consider St. Luke xiv. 9, 10, 29, and the notes there.

(l) See Deut. vi. 8: xi. 18. Also, Exod. xiii. 9, 16.

(m) Joshua i. 8, &c.—Consider this in connection with the Eye and the Hand to be so carefully guarded,—the one as the chief avenue, the other as the chief instrument of sin: St. Matthew v. 29 and 30.

(n) Numbers xv. 38, 39. Deut. xxii. 12.

(o) See the note on St. Matt. ix. 20.

largement of it, by which the Pharisees assumed the outward badge of extraordinary piety and of uncommon obedience to the Divine Commandment. Nor,—when it is discovered that both St. Mark and St. Luke concur in this place in preserving those additional words of reproach, “*who love to walk about in robes,*”(p)—is it possible to avoid suspecting that besides their gross hypocrisy, these miserable men practised a contemptible foppery in respect of their vestments, also. It is certain that our LORD is here speaking of the appetite for human praise and admiration; for He adds:

6, 7 and love the uppermost rooms at feasts, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets, and to be called of men, Rabbi, Rabbi.

To repeat the title *twice*, was a mark of especial respect.(q) The disposition which delights in this description of praise, our SAVIOUR elsewhere denounces as inimical to the spirit of Faith. “How can ye believe,” (he asks,) “which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?”(r)

The ambition of the Pharisees to occupy “the uttermost rooms at Feasts,” (that is, the places of highest honour at an Entertainment,) must have been notorious and prevalent; for when our Blessed LORD on a certain occasion “went into the house of one of the chief Pharisees to eat bread on the Sabbath Day,” we find that “He put forth a parable to those which were bidden, *when He marked how they chose out the chief places.*”(s) The “chief seats in the Synagogues” are alluded to by St. James in his Epistle.(t)

8 But be not ye called Rabbi: for one is your Master, *even* CHRIST; and all ye are brethren.

Our LORD here delivers a caution against the same sin which St. Paul condemns in those who said “I am of Paul: and I, of Apollos”(u) . . . The word rendered “Master,” properly means “Teacher:” and the course forbidden is that which St. Paul alludes to in his second Epistle to Timothy;(x) and which St. James forbids in the beginning of his 3rd Chapter,—“My Brethren, be not many Masters;” that is, “Teachers.” The Jews were divided not only into two great sects, but also into opposite schools, and contending parties,—their leading Rabbis erected themselves into “Leaders,” and putting forth their own private opinions with authority, as doctrines to be received by their followers, and Disciples. It is *this* to which our LORD here refers, and which He condemns.

Not but what St. Paul often calls himself a “Teacher,”(y) and on many occasions makes allusion to the title or office: but when he uses the term in a very different sense from that referred to by our LORD. He calls himself and others, “Teachers,” only because they taught *the Religion of CHRIST*,—not as the founders of new sects, or the advocates of sectarian opinions. Thus because all are pupils in the one school of CHRIST, all, perforce, are “Brethren.”

9 And call no *man* your Father upon the earth: for one is your Father, which is in Heaven.

“Father” is a title of the same class as “Teacher;” and in that particular sense in which the Jews applied it to their principal Doctors, and Founders of Schools, our SAVIOUR forbids its use among Christians. But that there is a sense in which it may be fitly used by ourselves,—St. Paul has shown.(z) As a loftier appellation than Teacher, the Eternal SON assigns it to the Eternal FATHER.

Take notice in how many other places our SAVIOUR, by implication, repeats the assurance which is contained in the last few words. See St. Matthew v. 16, 43, 48: vi. 1, 9: vii. 11. St. Mark xi. 25, 26, &c.

If any sectaries do reject the use of distinctive titles in addressing their fellow-men, on the plea that CHRIST Himself hath forbidden the practice, let them be consistent, and call no man on Earth *their Father*, either. Rather, let them learn from

(p) St. Mark xii. 38. St. Luke xx. 46.

(q) See St. Matthew vii. 21, 22; xxv. 11; St. Mark xiv. 45.

(r) St. John v. 44.

(s) St. Luke xiv. 1 and 7.

(u) 1 Cor i. 12.

(y) 1 Tim. ii. 7. 2 Tim. i. 11, &c.

(t) St. James ii. 2, 3.

(x) 2 Tim. iv. 3.

(z) 1 Cor. iv. 15.

the last-named injunction to interpret the others according to their spirit, and not according to their letter; and so, to interpret them rightly.

10 Neither be ye called masters; for one is your Master, *even* CHRIST.

Rather,—“*Leaders*,” (or “*Guides*;)” “for one is your *Leader*,” (or “*Guide*.”) See above, on verse 8; and below, on verse 16.

11, 12 But he that is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whosoever shall exalt himself shall be abased: and he that shall humble himself shall be exalted.

The injunction in verse 11, is found also in St. Matthew xx. 26, 27,—where see the notes. Verse 12 contains a famous saying, which has already been discussed in the Commentary on the latter part of St. Luke xviii. 14: and take notice that it is either to that place, or to the present, which St. Peter alludes in his First Epistle.^(a) “What indeed are all these sayings, but comments on that one, ‘Learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart?’^(b) What are they but modes of access to CHRIST? And why is it the universal Law, ‘that he that humbleth himself shall be exalted,’ but because He, ‘being in the form of God, . . . took upon Him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of man, and humbled Himself unto Death: wherefore God hath exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every name?’ . . . Even so will He, according to this Law, exalt every one in CHRIST, who after the same example humbles himself.” So far generally: but take notice that the special warning contained in verse 11, is addressed to persons in the Ministry. Our Divine Master here requires those who are set highest in the Church, to consider themselves as burdened with the heaviest stewardship. Thus titles of honour become transformed into notes of ministerial responsibility.

“Our LORD now turns to address the Pharisees themselves in words of awful judgment, which seems to anticipate the dreadful voice of His final sentence:” “denouncing eight^(c) Woes” in succession “against their hypocrisy and blindness,”—(as it is remarked in the heading of the Chapter:) corresponding with the Eight Beatitudes in the Sermon on the Mount. And thus, “His Ministry, which commenced with Beatitudes, ends with Woes; like too many passages of Human Life, which go forth in promise and terminate in self-reproach.”^(d) Take notice that St. Matthew alone of the Evangelists records either the Blessings or the Curses: the former of which were delivered to “the lost sheep of the House of Israel,”^(e) “the poor in spirit,” on a Mountain in Galilee:—the latter, on “the Mountain of the LORD,”^(f) and in the Temple, to the proud Professors of the Jewish Religion, and its “most straitest sect.”^(g) How are we thus reminded of the many singular and unexpected ways in which the Law finds its counterpart in the Gospel!^(h)

The Holy One had been hitherto addressing “the multitude and His Disciples.” He proceeds:

13 But Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye shut up the Kingdom of Heaven against men: for ye neither go in *yourselves*, neither suffer ye them that are entering to go in.

Our SAVIOUR here speaks of them as having the means of opening and shutting; whether it be “the Key of Knowledge”⁽ⁱ⁾ of which He chiefly speaks, or “the Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven.”^(k) His words may therefore be understood in many ways. To the Scribes appertained the interpretation of the Law; but by their vain glosses and merely human Traditions, these “blind guides” had partially taught, or had wrongly explained, and so, had in effect actually closed the Divine Oracles;^(l) for their wickedness in which respect, *He who gave the Law* proceeds now to reproach them in the severest manner.^(m) This does not seem a very obvious interpretation of the place; but he who compares what our LORD here says, with what is recorded of Him in St. Luke xi. 52, will probably think that it must

(a) 1 St. Pet. v. 6.

(b) St. Matth. xi. 29.

(c) See verses 13, 14, 15, 16, 23, 25, 27, 29.

(d) St. Matth. x. 6, &c.

(e) Is. li. 3.

(f) Williams.

(g) Acts xxvi. 5.

(h) Consider Deut. xxvii. 11 to 26.

(i) St. Luke xi. 52.

(k) St. Matthew xvi. 19.

(l) See on St. Mark vii. 5.

(m) See below, ver 16 to 22. See also St. Matth. xv. 3 to 9, &c.

be the very thing which our LORD intended. Then, further, the Government of the Church rested with the Scribes and Pharisees: but, as we have already seen, they availed themselves of their authority to "bind heavy burdens, and lay them on men's shoulders."^(u) To them was committed the power of excluding or restoring to visible Church-membership; but, (as in the case of the parents of the man born blind,) they shamefully abused their power.^(o) "I am the Door," (declares our Blessed LORD;) "by Me if any man enter in, he shall be saved:"^(p) but if these wicked men, while they ascribed His miracles to Beelzebub,^(q) denied His Teaching,^(r) and rejected Him themselves,—“agreed, that if any man did confess that He was CHRIST, he should be put out of the Synagogue:"^(s) the terror of which sentence deterred many members of the Sanhedrin from openly professing their belief in the SAVIOUR.^(t) Nor did their wickedness in this respect cease with our LORD's death.^(u)—"No man can stand or fall alone," (says an excellent writer;) "much less a minister of Religion. As no man can go to Heaven, but by His good example he will lead others there; so he, who by his evil life enters not in, shuts out others also."^(x)

14 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayer: therefore ye shall receive the greater damnation.

Our LORD charges these hypocrites with "making long prayer as a pretext" for their avarice, (or, as St. Paul expresses it, a "cloak of covetousness:")^(y) and point out that the peculiar circumstances which rendered their villany so monstrous in His sight, was, that they plundered *the Widow*, whom He had recommended for ever to the protection of His Church. Take notice that of the whole of this prolonged invective, filling an entire chapter in St. Matthew's Gospel, verses 6 and 14 are *the only portions* of which St. Mark and St. Luke were guided to preserve the record also.

"Pretenders to Holiness," (says an ancient writer,) "practice most upon women, who are less apt than men to see through their hypocrisy; and are easily inclined to love them on the ground of Religion."^(z) But consider how God reveals Himself throughout Scripture as the God of *the Widow*:^(a) singling her out as the very type of weakness, on more than one occasion.^(b)

15 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye compass sea and land to make one proselyte, and when he is made, ye make him twofold more the child of Hell than yourselves.

The same sins which were condemned in the former verse, are the subject of this. It was no zeal for God's honour, no love of souls, which induced the Pharisees to take unwearied pains, or, (as our LORD proverbially expresses it,) to "traverse sea and land to make one convert" to the Jewish Faith; but covetousness,—the sin of Judas: avarice,—disguised, as before, under the mask of Religion.^(c)

How fearful must have been the system on which so terrible a sentence could be passed by Him who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life" itself!

16, 17 Woe unto you, *ye* blind guides, which say, Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing; but whosoever shall swear by the gold of the temple, he is a debtor! *Ye* fools and blind: for whether is greater, the gold, or the temple that sanctifieth the gold?

(n) See above ver. 4.

(o) St. John ix. 34,—where see the margin. Compare St. John vii. 13, xvi. 2, and xix. 38.

(p) St. John x. 9.

(q) St. Matth. ix. 34: xiii. 24, &c.

(r) St. John ix. 16, &c. &c.

(s) St. John ix. 22.

(t) St. John xii. 42.

(u) For consider 1 Thess. ii. 16, and the places in the margin.

(x) Williams.

(y) 1 Thess. ii. 5.

(z) Pseudo-Chrysostom. Consider 2 Tim. iii. 6.

(a) As in Deut. x. 18: xiv. 29: xxvii. 19. Ps. cxlviii. 5: cxlvi. 9. Is. i. 17. Jer. vii. 6: xxii. 3. Ezek. xxii. 7. Zech. vii. 10. Mal. iii. 5, &c. &c.

(b) 1 Kings xvii. 9 and see the note on St. Luke xviii. 3.

(c) See St. Luke xvi. 14.

The Pharisees, in their vain-glorious pride, assumed to themselves the title of "Guides of the blind,"—as will be found pointed out in the note on St. John iii. 10. Our Lord therefore repeatedly reproaches them with *their own* blindness. "They be blind leaders of the blind," He says: *(d)* and again, below, in ver. 24, "Ye blind guides!"

"Blind" indeed, and worse than blind: "for" (says a learned Latin Father,) "when, in any dispute, or quarrel, or ambiguous cause, one swore by the Temple, and was afterwards convicted of falsehood, he was not held guilty. *That* is what is meant by 'Whosoever shall swear by the Temple, it is nothing:'—that is, he owes nothing. But if he had sworn by the gold of the Temple, he was immediately compelled to pay down that by which he had sworn."*(e)* By which words, take notice that not the gold which overspread the building, *(f)* is meant; but the gold in the Treasury, which was called *Corban*. *(g)* For the Jews held that if any one swore thus,—*"By the Temple,"* (or *"By the Altar,"*) "my goods shall not be yours,"—it was lawful for him, if he pleased, afterwards to alter his mind: but if he swore thus,—*"Corban, my gold is for the Temple,"* or, *"Corban, my cattle are for the Altar,"*—this was a vow which he might by no means neglect to perform. Thus, it will be perceived that the same wickedness, in part, is here alluded to which was formally denounced by the Lord of Heaven and Earth in St. Matthew xv. 5, 6, and more clearly in St. Mark vii. 11 to 13,—where the Reader is requested to see the notes.

18 And, Whosoever shall swear by the Altar, it is nothing; but whosoever sweareth by the gift that is upon it, he is guilty.

Or rather, "he is a debtor,"—as in verse 16.

19 Ye fools and blind; for whether *is* greater, the gift, or the Altar that sanctifieth the gift?

The Temple therefore *does* sanctify the gold; the Altar *does* sanctify the gift: as it is written in the Law,—*"Whatsoever touched the Altar shall be holy."* *(h)* Let this be remembered in connection with the furniture of Churches. Consider Numbers xvi. 37 to 39. *(i)*

"Fools and blind," indeed! and as such, our Lord condescends to reason the point with them in verses 17, 19, and the three following. But it was *wilful* blindness. They had put out the candle of the Lord within them. *(k)* And observe, that the motive of their wickedness was apparent; for "the gold" and "the gift" enriched *themselves*.

20, 21, 22 Whoso therefore shall swear by the Altar, sweareth by it, and by all things thereon. And whoso shall swear by the Temple, sweareth by it, and by Him that dwelleth therein. And he that shall swear by Heaven, sweareth by the throne of God, and by Him that sitteth thereon.

For, as the less is contained in the greater, so, in the oath which is sworn by the Temple and the Altar, is contained the oath by the gold and the gift. Moreover, since no inanimate thing can be supposed to be the witness of an oath, he who swears by the Altar, by the Temple, or by Heaven itself, must be understood to swear by Him to whom all these belong. And thus, on quite another ground, our SAVIOUR convicts the Pharisees of blindness.

Wherefore, it is said in another place, "*Swear not at all: neither by Heaven, for it is God's throne; nor by the Earth, for it is His footstool.*" *(l)*

23 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier

(d) St. Matth. xv. 14.

(e) Jerome.

(f) Concerning the gold of the *first* Temple, see 1 Kings vi. 21, 22.

(g) St. Matth. xxvii. 6, in the original.

(h) Exod. xxix. 37.

(i) See also Leviticus xxvii. 28. Joshua vi. 19, in connection with vii. 15 to 26.

(k) Consider St. Luke xi. 34 to 36.

(l) St. Matth. v. 34 to 37, and the notes thereon.

matters of the Law, Judgment, Mercy, and Faith: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

That is, "To do *justly*, and to love *mercy*, and to walk *humbly with thy GOD*," (*m*) is what the LORD chiefly requires of thee; (to which words of the Prophet Micah, our LORD surely refers in this place): and yet thou art not at liberty to omit exactness in the most trifling matter of tithes, either: whether to be paid by thyself, (*n*) or to be received of others. (*o*)

But take note, that the tithing of "mint, anise, and cummin" took place in pursuance of no precept of the Law of GOD. It was an addition made by the Scribes: and yet we find that it here obtains the sanction of CHRIST himself; for He tells the men of His day,—“Ye ought not to leave it undone.” So that this is one of the many instances to be found in the Gospels where our LORD teaches men to conform to Ecclesiastical rules,—even though no express warrant for them is to be found in the Bible. He here illustrates the saying with which he began his discourse:—“The Scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. All therefore, whatsoever they bid you observe, that observe and do.” (*p*)

24 Ye blind guides, which strain at a gnat, and swallow a camel.

Rather, “Which strain *out*,” a proverbial saying, which seems to refer to the practice of those who in the preparation of their drink are careful first to strain it; and which has an obvious application to as many as, being highly scrupulous in regard to trifles, are yet found to allow themselves freely in monstrous crimes. The Camel is selected in this and another sacred proverb (*q*) as the very emblem, to an Eastern eye, of what is huge, cumbrous, and unwieldy.

The “Woe” which follows is only another example of the Hypocrisy denounced in ver. 23. The Pharisees were over-scrupulous in “the washing of pots and cups:” but the precept “Wash *you*, make *you* clean,” they quite neglected:—as it follows,—

25 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye make clean the outside of the cup and of the platter, but within they are full of extortion and excess.

“The cup” is for drink, and “the platter” for meat: reference is therefore here made to daily food; and it is declared that the Pharisees furnished forth their tables by extortion and unrighteousness. Woe to them for their sin! and woe for the hypocrisy which could suppose that by “the washing of cups and pots,” (*r*)—the cleansing of “the outside of cup and platter,”—they could win for themselves acceptance with God!

26 Thou blind Pharisee, cleanse first that *which is* within the cup and platter, that the outside of them may be clean also.

How this was to be done our SAVIOUR explained on the other occasion when he delivered a very similar discourse: namely, “Bestow in alms the things which are within.” See St. Luke xi. 41, and the note there. At the same time, there is doubtless conveyed an injunction to cultivate inward *personal* purity and holiness; as in St. Luke xi. 39, 40,—which see: for *there*, instead of “*they* are full of extortion and excess,” (namely the cup and platter,) (*s*) it is said,—“*your* inward part is full of ravening and wickedness.”

And this contrast of the inward impurity of the *Pharisees* with their fair exterior is what our LORD proceeds to denounce a further “Woe” upon.

27, 28 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are like unto whited sepulchres, which indeed appear beautiful outward, but are within full of dead *men’s* bones, and of all uncleanness. Even

(*m*) Micah vi. 8.

(*n*) See St. Luke xviii. 12, and the note there.

(*o*) As the same word is translated in St. Luke xi. 42.

(*p*) See above, verses 2, 3.

(*q*) See St. Matth. xix. 24, and the note there.

(*r*) St. Mark vii. 4 and 8.

(*s*) See above, ver. 25. The same word is rendered “extortion” in one Gospel, and “ravening” in the other.

so ye also outwardly appear righteous unto men, but within ye are full of hypocrisy and iniquity.

And "the LORD seeth not as man seeth: for man looketh on the outward appearance; but the LORD looketh on *the heart*." (f)

The point of this rebuke evidently consists in the contrast between the outside and the inside of a sepulchral chamber. Outwardly, whitened with chalk and adorned with colours, the sepulchres of the Jews "appeared beautiful;" but within, they were full of defilement. And such, as our LORD declares, were the Scribes and Pharisees! . . . He had said something very like this on another occasion, (u) but it was *not* the same thing. The comparison in the text was, (as might be expected,) in common use among the Jews. See Acts xxiii. 3, and consider Psalm v. 9. . . . Observe the transition to what follows. Our LORD's speech is still among the graves.

29, 30, 31 Woe unto you, Scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! because ye build the tombs of the Prophets, and garnish the sepulchres of the righteous, and say, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the Prophets. Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are, the children of them which killed the Prophets.

The Reader should compare these verses with St. Luke xi. 47 and 48 and read the notes thereon.

By professing that they would not have shared the guilt of their Fathers in slaying the Prophets, the "Scribes and Pharisees" admitted that they were *the children of those who slew the Prophets*; and it is implied that they had inherited the murderous disposition of their sires also. The meaning is, in fact, partly illustrated by the expression "generation of vipers," in ver. 33; that is, "*offspring of vipers*:" by which it is implied that these men derived from their Fathers,—inherited by their very birth,—a satanic nature. As our LORD elsewhere says,—"*Ye are of your Father the Devil, and the lusts of your Father ye will do. He was a murderer from the beginning.*" (x)

32 Fill ye up then the measure of your Fathers.

As indeed, in three days, they did: yea, they filled it to overflowing. But, till their "iniquity" (like that of the Amorites of old) "*was full*," God withheld his judgments. (y) In the meanwhile, it was because CHRIST was well aware of the murderous course they were bent upon pursuing, not only towards himself, but towards Disciples likewise, that he thus bitterly denounced the hypocrisy with which they affected grief while they garnished the sepulchres of the Prophets whom their Fathers had already slain. Consider by all means 1 Thessalonians ii. 14 to 16.

33 Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of Hell?

"Serpents,"—for they resembled "that old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan:" (z) and "generation of vipers," (as both He and his Forerunner had already called them,) (a) for a reason assigned in the note on ver. 31. As they partook of the deeds of the Evil One, how could they escape his end?

With which terrible words, our LORD gathers up all the awful denunciations which go before. And if, in the opinion of any, these should appear not altogether in accordance with the sayings of CHRIST elsewhere recorded,—let the occasion be first considered: (b) and next, let it be observed, that "throughout these dreadful declarations, it is the cause of the Widow, and of His martyred Apostles, and of his FATHER's Honour, which kindles in our LORD the Divine charity which burned forth in these judgments." (c) But above all let us remember that we know nothing

(f) 1 Sam. xvi. 7. (u) See St. Luke xi. 44, and the note. (x) St. John viii. 44.
(y) Consider Gen. xv. 16 and 1 Thess. ii. 16. See also St. Mark ii. 6, 7, 8; and the notes there.
(z) Rev. xx. 2: xii. 9. (a) St. Matth. iii. 7: St. Luke iii. 7: St. Matth. xii. 34.
(b) See the note prefixed to the present chapter. (c) Williams.

concerning Him, nor can know, save what He hath himself seen fit to reveal. Long-suffering He is; but only in order to bring men to Repentance.(d) Kind and gentle, also; but only with the merciful and upright. "With the froward, Thou wilt show thyself froward."(e) When the season of probation is ended, our Lord reveals himself no longer as a merciful SAVIOUR, but as a terrible Judge:(f) and we only deceive ourselves if we rely on *one* of the Divine Attributes to the exclusion of the others.

34 Wherefore, behold, I send unto you Prophets, and Wise men, and Scribes:

When our Lord employed the sayings which follow, on a different occasion, (which St. Luke alone records,) He prefaced them with the words, "Therefore also said the *Wisdom of GOD*."(g) CHRIST is therefore "the WISDOM OF GOD;" and it is *He* who "sent" Prophets, (that is, men divinely inspired to declare the mind of God and His will,)—Wise men, (that is, persons full of Divine Wisdom,)—and Scribes, (that is, persons authorized to interpret and teach the Law of CHRIST's Kingdom,)(h)—in order to make the wickedness of the nation undeniable, and without excuse. Instead of "Prophets and Wise men and Scribes," it is (in St. Luke) "Prophets and Apostles."

and *some* of them ye shall kill and crucify: and *some* of them shall ye scourge in your synagogues, and persecute *them* from city to city:

Thus St. Stephen was stoned:(i) St. James was slain with the sword:(k) St. Peter was crucified:(l) the Apostles were imprisoned with scourging:(m) St. Paul and Barnabas were persecuted from city to city.(n)—Take notice of the propriety with which from ver. 34 to the end of this chapter, has been selected as the Gospel for St. Stephen's Day.

35 that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel unto the blood of Zacharias son of Barachias, whom ye slew between the Temple and the Altar.

That our SAVIOUR should have reckoned "righteous Abel" as the first of His Martyrs, is what we should expect; but who is this Zacharias, whom He mentions as if he were *the last*? Zechariah, (one of the Twelve minor Prophets, B. C. 520,) was indeed "the son of Berechiah;"(o) but it is nowhere recorded concerning him that he suffered martyrdom. On the other hand, there is an account in the Book of Chronicles of the martyrdom of a Zechariah, which corresponds entirely with what our SAVIOUR here declares; but then the Zechariah there spoken of is described as "the son of *Jehoiada* the priest."(p) Moreover, he was slain in the time of King Joash,(q) and does not seem in any sense to have been *the last* of that "noble army" to which he belonged. On the whole, however, it seems reasonable to suppose that *this* was the person to whom our SAVIOUR here makes allusion. The recorded name of his father is no real obstacle, as we have elsewhere repeatedly shown:(r) while his remarkable dying words, ("The Lord look upon it, and require it!")(s) even suggest the high probability that one who so fell "in the Court of the House of the Lord," should have been in some special way avenged by Him "who helpeth them to right that suffer wrong."(t) "The voice of his blood" may well have "cried unto God from the ground,"(u) *as in the case of Abel . . .* "That Thou mayest take the matter into Thine hand," (saith the Psalmist,) "the poor committeth himself unto Thee.(x)

(d) Rom. ii. 4, and 2 St. Peter iii. 9, 15.

(e) Ps. xviii. 26.

(f) See the note on St. Luke xix. 41: also on St. Matth. xxi. 44.

(g) St. Luke xi. 49, where see the note.

(h) As in St. Matth. xiii. 52.

(i) Acts vii. 59. (k) Acts xii. 1 to 3.

(l) Consider St. John xxi. 18, 19: 2 St. Pet. i. 14.

(m) Acts v. 18, 40.

(n) Acts xiii. 50: xiv. 5, 6, 19, 20.

(o) Zech. i. 1.

(p) 2 Chron. xxiv. 20.

(q) About B. C. 840.

(r) See the notes on St. Luke iii. 23, (on the words "son of Heli;") and on ver. 27, (on the words "son of Salathiel;") above all, on ver. 36, on the words "son of Cainan." Consider also how frequently the Jews bore *two* names. Of this, the Gospel contains many instances: as St. Matth. x. 2, 3: Acts iv. 36: xii. 12, 25: xiii. 9, &c.

(s) 2 Chron. xxiv. 22.

(t) Psalm cxlvi. 6.

(u) Gen. iv. 10. Consider the allusion to that cry in Heb. xii. 24.

(x) Ps. x. 14.

A remarkable circumstance remains to be mentioned in connection with these words of our LORD. The Jewish Historian, Josephus, relates that an eminent and most excellent citizen, named "Zacharias, the son of *Baruch*," was actually slain in the Temple, immediately before the destruction of the city; his only offence being that he denounced the wickedness of his countrymen. This event, at the time of our LORD's speaking, was yet future, and therefore cannot be thought to be the particular event to which He alludes. The suggestion, however, may be permitted, that since this man's murder must have been very present to the mind of Him who spoke the words of the text, (for "precious in the sight of the LORD is the death of His Saints;" *(y)*) and He "callesth those things which be not, as though they were;" *(z)*)—He will have so divinely shaped his words that they obtained a double fulfillment. And thus, besides other blessed consequences, the first Believers, calling to mind His saying, will have found in the event, when it took place, a striking confirmation of their Faith in the Divine Speaker; whose words will have proved, like those of His ancient prophets, capable of repeated accomplishment. In this way, Abel and Zacharias will have been *literally* the first and the last of the Martyrs whose blood was avenged by the destruction of Jerusalem.

36 Verily I say unto you, All these things shall come upon this generation.

The allusion in the text is obviously to the Destruction of Jerusalem: and as previously on approaching the city He had wept over it, *(a)* so now does He also take leave of it, or rather of his enemies, with a similar exclamation of pity.

37 O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, *thou* that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under *her* wings, and ye would not!

Rather, "How often *have I wished!*" . . . "The same Spirit speaks which taught David to address Him with this allusion, 'hide me under the shadow of Thy wings;' and gave him the solemn promise—'He shall cover thee with His feathers, and under His wings shalt thou trust.'" *(b)*

38, 39 Behold, your house is left unto you desolate. For I say unto you, Ye shall not see Me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD.

And with those words, He "went out, and departed from the Temple;" *(c)* leaving the House "desolate" indeed, for He, its Glory, had departed!

The self-same lamentation over Jerusalem had already flowed from the same blessed lips on altogether a different occasion. *(d)* Its concluding words seem to imply, "Ye shall not see Me, until ye shall be willing to recognize in Me your MESSIAH!" whereby the Divine Speaker refers to the Day, yet future, when He will gather together the outcasts of Israel; *(e)* and those words of the cxviii. Psalm which were lately heard on the lips of a few faithful persons, when the SAVIOUR entered his Capital, *(f)* shall be poured forth in welcome by the inhabitants of the New Jerusalem, and become the spontaneous utterance of every tongue. *(g)*

"Be it so that these things are marvellous in our eyes, and that we discover no traces of their approach. Is anything too hard for God? What if the iniquity of His people should be removed in a day, *(h)* and a nation be born at once? *(i)* What if 'at the second time,' He should make himself known to His brethren? *(k)* Then peradventure will be accomplished what cannot without violence be understood either of the destruction of Jerusalem, or of the Day of Judgment; then shall they look on Him whom they pierced, *(l)* and say Blessed is He that cometh in the Name of the LORD." *(m)*

(y) Ps. cxvi. 15.

(z) Rom. iv. 17.

(a) Williams; quoting Ps. xvii. 8: xci. 4: and see lvii. 1, and lxi. 4.

(b) Ibid.

(c) St. Matth. xxiv. 1.

(d) See St. Luke xiii. 34, 35.

(e) Consider Is. xlix. 20 to 22: lx. 4: lxvi. 12.

(f) See St. Matth. xxi. 9, 15. &c.

(g) See Philip. ii. 10.

(h) Zech. iii. 9.

(i) Isaiah lxvi. 8.

(k) Acts vii. 13.

(l) St. John xix. 37, quoting Zech. xii. 10.

Compare Rev. i. 7.

(m) Churton.

CHAPTER XXIV.

1 CHRIST foretelleth the destruction of the Temple. 3 What and how great calamities shall be before it. 29 The signs of His coming to Judgment. 36 And because that day and hour is unknown, 42 we ought to watch like good servants, expecting every moment our Master's coming.

THE attentive Reader of the Gospel will be careful to approach the present chapter with the solemn tenor of the preceding one full in his recollection. After our Lord's stern leave-taking of the Scribes and Pharisees,—(those hypocrites who had either led astray or devoured “the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand,”)—it follows:

1 And JESUS went out, and departed from the Temple: and His Disciples came to *Him* for to show Him the buildings of the Temple.

The blessed Company, in departing, are found to have lingered about the Porch. Their Master's recent intimation of approaching judgments which were to overtake the City, and the unusual solemnity of His discourses throughout this eventful day, may well have suggested remarks on the massive proportions, and gorgeous splendour of the edifice they were leaving, and which seemed as if it had been built for Eternity; but which must perforce share the destruction of Jerusalem itself. They “spake,” (says St. Luke,) “of the Temple,—how it was adorned with goodly stones and gifts;”(a) and “one of His Disciples,” (St. Peter perhaps,) “saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings are here.”(b) Thereupon, repeating a solemn declaration which He had already uttered,(c) and as if in allusion to that saying of the prophet Haggai, “before a stone was laid upon a stone,”(d)—it is added:

2 And JESUS said unto them, See ye not all these things? verily I say unto you, There shall not be left here one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

And so it actually came to pass, when Jerusalem was at last taken by the Romans, after a five months' siege; the Temple was destroyed by fire, and the conflagration raged with such fury, that it seemed as if not only the Temple but the very hill itself on which it stood, was about to be consumed. Consider our Lord's prophetic allusion to this event, in St. Matthew xxii. 7. Not one stone of the Temple was left upon another; for the plough passed over its site: according to the prophecy of Jeremiah, quoting by name the words of a yet older prophet,—“Micah the Morasthite prophesied in the days of Hezekiah King of Judah, and spake to all the people of Judah, saying, Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, *Zion shall be ploughed like a field*, and Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the mountain of the House as the high places of a forest.”(e) See more in the note on St. Mark xiii. 2.

We trace the SAVIOUR'S footsteps from the city gate in the direction of the Mount of Olives; where he took his seat, and thence surveyed the beautiful spectacle which the city presented. The Temple, in particular, was conspicuous from that spot;(f) covered with plates of gold, and of a most dazzling whiteness,—which must now have reflected the glories of the setting Sun. “The time and circum-

(a) St. Luke xxi. 5.

(c) See St. Luke xix. 44.

(e) Jer. xxvi. 18, quoting Micah iii. 12.

(b) St. Mark xiii. 1; where see the note.

(d) Hag. ii. 15.

(f) St. Mark xiii. 3.

stances were such as rendered it the most solemn evening that the world has ever witnessed before or since, when we consider what the words were which had been last spoken,—the scene,—and the persons who were now assembled.”(g) Four of the Disciples,—St. Peter, St. James, St. John, and St. Andrew,(h)—at last approached Him with a twofold question; in reply to which, the Holy One delivered his tremendous predictions respecting both the destruction of Jerusalem and the consummation of all things.

3 And as He sat upon the mount of Olives, the Disciples came unto Him privately, saying, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the end of the World?

As already intimated, this was a twofold question; and twofold, in like manner, was the answer. Unless this be attended to, all that follows will seem hopelessly confused,—having reference, now, to the Fall of the City; now, to the End of the World. The Disciples ask, (firstly,) “When shall *these things* be?” “and what sign will there be when *these things* shall come to pass?”(i)—(which phrase, it should be observed, denotes that overthrow of “these great buildings,”(k) to which our SAVIOUR had been making recent allusion;) and (secondly,) “What shall be the sign of Thy coming, and of the *End of the World*?”

On all this it has been well remarked,—“These eager inquirers, not understanding things to come, knew not even how to ask information about them, with that distinctness of thought and meaning which we learn from looking back upon the history. Through ignorance, they coupled together two questions really quite distinct. In truth, it must have seemed very strange to them, Jews as they were, and expecting the Kingdom of Heaven as the glory of God’s people Israel, to hear of the magnificent and costly buildings of the Temple being thrown down. They must have felt as Joshua did, when he said to the LORD, ‘And what wilt Thou do unto Thy great Name?’”(l) For if Jerusalem was to be destroyed, they knew not how to think where the Kingdom of God was to be, or how the prophecies of its glories were to be fulfilled. Nothing less than the End of the World, it seemed to them, could be the occasion of such an overthrow. So they asked at once about the destruction of the earthly Jerusalem, and the final coming of our LORD at the end of the World.”(m)

And yet, “in this their ignorance or confusion of thought,” (remarks a pious writer,) “they were still wiser than the most learned: for they seem to have gathered from some of our LORD’s sayings that there was some intimate connection between the two events; though how to separate the type from the antitype, the lesser from the more full accomplishment, they knew not. Thus did they, in their ignorance, as babes, surpass the wisdom of the wise.”(n)

Our LORD commences his reply to the inquiry of the Disciples, in the next verse; and His reply occupies the whole of the present and the following chapter.

4, 5 And JESUS answered and said unto them, Take heed that no man deceive you. For many shall come in My Name, saying, I am CHRIST; and shall deceive many.

“And the time draweth near,” (it is added in St. Luke’s Gospel:) “go ye not therefore after them.”(o) This then is the first “sign” to which our LORD directed the attention of His Church; and we shall find that he recurs to it, in verse 23. In the Acts, one remarkable instance of the foretold imposture is recorded in the history of Simon Magus;(p) and profane historians relate others. “It may be observed,” (says a thoughtful writer,) (q) “that as Josephus records the abundant fulfillment of all these things in the primary sense, the Revelation of St. John shadows forth the same as again to be fulfilled in the latter days.”(r) Our LORD proceeds to give His Disciples a second token in the two next verses, which are found in all the three Gospels,(s)—containing in each instance the same caution to the Disciples not to be terrified.

(g) Williams.

(k) St. Mark xiii. 2.

(m) From a MS. Sermon by the Rev. C. Marriott.

(n) St. Luke xxi. 8.

(r) See Rev. xiii. 13, 14, &c.

(h) See St. Mark xiii. 3.

(l) Joshua vii. 9.

(p) Acts xiii. 9 to 11.

(s) St. Mark xiii. 7, 8.

St. Luke xxi. 9, 10, 11.

(i) St. Luke xxi. 7.

(n) Williams.

(q) Williams.

6, 7 And ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars: see that ye be not troubled: for all *these things* must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places.

"And fearful sights and great signs shall there be from Heaven,"—it is added in St. Luke's Gospel; where see the note.(*t*)

8 All these *are* the beginning of sorrows.

Rather, "*of birth-pangs.*"(*u*) The expression is remarkable, and in the highest degree suggestive,—recalling those many other places of Scripture where Creation is spoken of in kindred terms: now, as groaning and travailing,(*x*)—now, as destined to undergo a process of "Regeneration."(*y*) It seems here to be implied that the beginning of that glorious change,—the birth-day of the new Creation,(*z*)—was already close at hand.

9, 10 Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for My Name's sake. And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another.

This will be found given much more fully by St. Mark,—to whose Gospel the Reader is referred.(*a*)

11, 12 And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many. And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold.

Rather, "*of the many;*" that is, "*of most.*" Our Lord, therefore, here says, that while many will renounce the Faith, (for *that* is the "*offence*" spoken of in verse 10;) and many will pervert it, (for *that* is the work of the "*false prophets*" noticed in verse 11;) the love of the larger number will experience decay. And St. Paul marks the fulfilment of his Lord's words in several places.(*b*)

These "*false prophets*" (together with the "*false Christs,*" in verse 5,) will be found named again in verse 24. It is instructive to compare the place with 1 St. John iv. 1, and 2 St. Peter ii. 1.

13 But he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

This is the perpetual counsel and promise of the Gospel. To patience there must be added perseverance,—*Endurance, to the end.* See the note on St. Matthew x. 22, (where the same saying is found to recur;) and consider how large a share of notice, so much larger than might have been supposed by one who had never attended to the circumstance, this grace of Patience, Endurance, or Abiding, (for the word in every case is the same,) obtains in the Gospel. "*The Lord direct your hearts into the Love of God and into the patient waiting for CHRIST,*"(*c*) is almost a summary of the second Epistle to the Thessalonians.(*d*)

14 And this Gospel of the Kingdom shall be preached in all the World for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come.

"The end," namely, of Jerusalem,—already referred to in ver. 6. When He declared that "*the Gospel must first be published among all nations,*"(*e*) our Lord's words are not to be narrowed to suit our notions of what may be effected by ordinary human exertions. "*Of the labours and success of the Apostolic body, what may we not infer, when St. Paul alone fully preached the Gospel almost throughout the Roman Empire, from Arabia to Damascus, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, in*

(*t*) On St. Luke xxi. 11.

(*u*) Consider St. John xvi. 21.

(*x*) Rom. viii. 22.

(*y*) See St. Matthew xix. 28, and the note there.

(*z*) See the note on St. Matthew iii. 17, &c.

(*a*) See St. Mark xiii. 9 to 13, and the notes there.

(*b*) See 2 Tim. i. 15: iv. 10, 16. Hebrews x. 25.

(*c*) 2 Thess. iii. 5.

(*d*) See also the references in the foot note on St. Matth. iv. 7.

(*e*) St. Mark xiii. 10.

Italy and in Spain? (f) Scarcely a city of eminence in Asia Minor, in Macedonia, or in Greece, but was blessed with his presence, and enlightened by the doctrine of this great Teacher of the Gentiles. In Rome itself, he bore witness to the Truth; and in the palace of the Emperor, he was not without his converts." (g) From his Epistle to the Colossians, we learn that already had the Gospel been "preached to the whole Creation which is under Heaven;" that it had presented itself to the Colossians, as to "all the World." (h) "Have they not heard?" (he asks;) "Yes verily, their sound"—(meaning the voices of the Apostles, and thus interpreting a Prophecy,)—"their sound went into all the Earth, and their words unto the ends of the World." (i) And even such a world-wide commission did their Divine Master give them, before His Ascension. (k)

Having hitherto foretold the remote signs of the fall of Jerusalem, our Lord proceeds to describe the immediate tokens of its downfall. See the note on St. Luke xxi. 21.

15 When ye therefore shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stand in the holy place, (whoso readeth let him understand:)

The place referred to,—Daniel ix. 27, (l) is obscure and difficult; but our Lord here helps us to fix the meaning of His prophet: for His words, as St. Luke relates them, were,—“When ye shall see Jerusalem compassed with armies, then know that the desolation thereof is nigh.” (m) The allusion therefore, is to the standards of the Roman army, (which were held in “abomination” by the Jews both on account of the representations of the Emperor which they bore, and because the soldiers were known to offer sacrifice to them:;) and it is foretold that the day was coming when those hateful ensigns of desolation should be seen standing on holy ground, “where they ought not;” (n) that is, compassing “the Holy City,” (o) round about.

Thus then our Blessed Lord, having foretold in the preceding verses, first, what should be the remote signs of the destruction which was coming upon Jerusalem; (p) —and next, the afflictions which must first befall His Church; (q) —begins, in this place, to describe what should be the signal that the judgments of Heaven were close at hand; and to indicate to the believers what measures they should take in the hour of danger, to secure their own personal safety.

It will be perceived that the few words which our Lord adds parenthetically, (“let him that readeth understand,”) are intended to recall the first words of Daniel ix. 25.

16 Then let them which be in Judæa flee into the mountains:

“And let them which are in the midst of it,” (that is, of Jerusalem,) “depart out.” So it is added in St. Luke’s Gospel,—where see the notes. (r) It is there shown that a marvellous escape for the people of God was duly contrived by Divine Providence, even after the city was “compassed with armies” for the first time: as well as what an unmistakable token of coming danger was afterwards finished, when Titus finally encircled the city with a wall.

17, 18, 19 let him which is on the housetop not come down to take anything out of his house: neither let him which is in the field return back to take his clothes. And woe unto them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

These three verses will be found discussed in the notes on St. Mark xiii. 15, 16, 17.

20 But pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the Sabbath day:

And doubtless the Christian *did* make both these petitions theirs; doubtless also

(f) See Gal. i. 17. Rom. xv. 19, 24, 28.

(h) Col. i. 6, 23.

(k) See St. Mark xvi. 15,

(m) St. Luke xxi. 20.

(p) Verses 4 to 8.

(n) St. Mark xiii. 14.

(q) Verses 9 to 11.

(g) Churton,—quoting Phil. i. 13; iv. 22.

(i) Rom. x. 18, quoting Ps. xix. 4.

(l) Compare Dan. xi. 31; xii. 11.

(o) St. Matth. iv. 5: xxvii. 53.

(r) On St. Luke xxi. 21 and 22.

in respect of both they were heard. As to the *season* of their flight, we *know* what happened: for the events alluded to in the note on St. Luke xxi. 24, which put it into the power of any one who pleased to leave the city, took place in the beginning of *October*, A. D. 66,—when the weather was yet mild, and favourable for travelling. Or, if any remained behind till the beginning of the final siege, which took place four years later, the result will have been still more striking: for that event belongs to the months of April or May.

The Law which forbade more than “a Sabbath-day’s journey” on the Sabbath-day,^(s) was accounted binding by the Christian converts from Judaism; at the time of the siege of Jerusalem; for the sanctions of the ceremonial Law, though they could not be any longer considered binding on the conscience, might not be all at once disregarded,—simply because Light and Immortality had been brought to light in the Gospel.^(t) Thus we find St. Paul testifying his desire to keep the Jewish feasts at Jerusalem:^(u) and conforming to the usages of the Law in many respects.^(x) But it is clear that flight from the City to the distance of a single mile, (and “a Sabbath-day’s journey” was no more,) would have been no boon while an enemy occupied the country, and there was a hostile party within the walls, ready to overtake and destroy the fugitives. Hence, then, the motive of the first Christians for praying that their day of flight might not be found to correspond with the Sabbath-day.

21 for then shall be great tribulation, such as was not since the beginning of the World to this time, no, nor ever shall be.

The argument is,—I bid you flee for your lives, escaping to the mountains; and exhort you to pray that, when that hour arrives, neither feebleness of body, nor the severity of the season, nor the impediment of the Sabbath, may prevent you from availing yourselves of the timely warning: “for then shall be great tribulation.”

Josephus, after going over a sickening enumeration of the several horrors of the siege, (which will be found noticed more in detail in the note on St. Mark xiii. 19,) says that finding it impossible to go distinctly over every instance of these men’s iniquity, he will remark briefly that neither did any other city ever suffer such miseries, nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness than this, from the beginning of the world. “The blended horrors of war and sedition, of famine and pestilence, were grievous and astonishing, beyond example and beyond conception; and if we except the days when the Deluge overwhelmed a whole world of sinners, never did there perish so many of the human race in so short a period of time.”^(y)

22 And except those days should be shortened, there should no flesh be saved: but for the elect’s sake those days shall be shortened.

See a long note on this, in the Commentary on St. Mark’s Gospel.^(z) “Many have shown how very accurately all things were fulfilled at the taking of Jerusalem: and the fulfillment was no doubt highly striking and remarkable; for of course the circumstances were as exact as if our Lord’s words had been historical and not prophetic.” But, as the same writer with much truth adds,—“It is easier to see such literal fulfillments than to follow out what higher meanings our Lord’s language may contain; nor indeed is the pursuit of the former in itself so important; but being more sensible and palpable, the literal fulfillment of prophecy is better calculated for those weak believers who require such evidence.”^(a) In the highest degree *interesting* it must however be allowed to be, and ever worthy of our attention; though the testimony of History to the Truth of CHRIST’S words can of course add nothing to the Faith of him who entertains right notions of God. “Yea, let God be true, but every man a liar.”^(b)

Our Lord then again takes up the subject of the false Christs, with which He had begun His Discourse.^(c) False claimants to be the anointed Redeemer of Israel were to arise; and the vain, but most seductive pretensions of these Impostors, was

(s) Ex. xvi. 29. Compare Acts i. 12.

(t) Consider Rom. xiv. 5, Gal. v. 3, &c.

(u) Acts. xviii. 21: xx. 16.

(x) Acts. xxi. 20 to 26.

(y) Churton.

(z) St. Mark xiii. 20.

(a) Williams.

(b) Rom. iii. 4.

(c) See above, verses 4 and 5,—and the note.

the special sign with which He both began and ended His reply to the inquiry, "What sign will there be when these things shall come to pass?"^(d)

By this however it is not meant that the four next verses belong to the former half of the present prophecy,—that is, are to be referred to the destruction of Jerusalem rather than to the end of the World. We think, on the contrary, that the transition is made at this very place, and that it is made by the word "*then*"—with which verse 22 commences.^(e) But "*then*" is a word of ambiguous signification: sometimes implying "at that *same* time:" sometimes, "*next* in order of time,"—which last we suspect, is in the main its meaning here; yet not exclusively, as is shown in the notes on verses 25 and 26.—It will be perceived therefore, that, besides a prediction of the remoter (*f*) and the nearer (*g*) signs of the Destruction of the City; our Lord may be thought to have supplied His Church with a prediction of the remoter, (*h*) as well as the nearer (*i*) signs of his second Advent. That *the same* signs should be appealed to, in either case, need create no surprise. We know from other parts of Scripture that the signs will actually be the same.^(k)

23, 24 Then if any man shall say unto you, Lo, here *is* CHRIST, or there; believe *it* not. For there shall arise false Christs, and false Prophets, and shall show great signs and wonders; insomuch that, if *it were* possible, they shall deceive the very elect.

"Rather "so as to," (that is "in order to")^(l) "deceive, if possible, even the elect;" that is, the Christians.

25 Behold, I have told you before.

"The description of the seducers who should be the ruin of multitudes, was not so minute and full as the Holy JESUS, in compassion to those who believed on Him, and to those who did not, saw to be expedient. This point therefore, He graciously resumes; and in the verses already quoted, and some which follow, delineates the impostors with such particularity, that they who had read the prediction, (and it was published early, that all might read it,) must have been blind not to see its accomplishment, if it ever was accomplished; and mad, to be deluded, if they did behold it. His admonition was:"

26 Wherefore if they shall say unto you, Behold, He is in the desert; go not forth: behold, *He is* in the secret chambers: believe *it* not.

"And the Jewish Historian Josephus, as if it had been his design to illustrate this passage, informs us that false prophets and impostors prevailed on multitudes to follow them into the desert, promising there to display prodigies and signs; but that those who listened to them suffered the just punishment of their folly, and were either slain or dispersed by the Roman governor." One such case of imposture on the part of an Egyptian, is found alluded to in the Acts.^(m) Other pretenders arose in Jerusalem itself. "Even at the last, when the Temple was in flames, multitudes of all ages flocked thither from the city, upon the proclamation of a false Prophet; and of six thousand assembled there, on this occasion, not one escaped the fire or the sword."⁽ⁿ⁾

It is presumed, however, that by thus recurring to the subject of the "false Christs and false prophets" who should appear about the time alluded to, our SAVIOUR referred to the impostors who should arise immediately *after* the destruction of the city,^(o) even more than to those whose boastful pretensions attended that event. Nay, the words of such a wondrous Speaker, may reasonably be suspected of yet greater depth and fullness; may be thought to include in their far-sighted scope and intention the remote, no less than the immediate future,—so that the reference will be general, and extend to the whole of those "signs and lying

(d) St. Luke xxi. 7.

(g) Ver. 15 to 22.

(k) See on St. Mark xiii. 22.

(m) See Acts xxi. 38, and the marginal note.

(n) Churton.

(e) And so St. Mark xiii. 21.

(h) Ver. 23 to 28.

(l) Compare St. Mark xiii. 22.

(o) See 1 St. John ii. 18.

(f) Ver. 4 to 14.

(i) Ver. 29 to 33.

wonders" of which St. Paul speaks as reserved for the days of "the Man of Sin" which are to precede the final Advent of CHRIST.(p)

Many indeed have thought that from ver. 23, onwards, has reference *only* to the end of the World; but, as it seems, without sufficient reason. A view strictly in accordance with the nature of prophetic language in general would rather be, that while the warning was capable of a direct application to the days of the siege, and the period which came immediately after, our LORD's language was divinely contrived to be also descriptive of events yet more remote.(q) Thus he is found to have fashioned his predictions of the Destruction of Jerusalem,(r) and of the Destruction of the World,(s) unmistakably on the same type,—in language which is intended to recall the History of the Destruction of Sodom. In which divine method there is no *ambiguity*, but there is wondrous depth and fullness, as well as a large amount of implied (and, it may well be thought, of unsuspected) doctrine. Doubtless, had our SAVIOUR pleased, He could have specified the hour and the day, the month and the year, when the events He spoke of should occur: but would the Church then have been as watchful, as we know she was,—always "looking for, and hasting unto the coming of the Day of God?"(t) She is purposely kept in ignorance of "the day" and "the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh,"(u) in order that she may "watch."

On the whole, therefore, we assume that, in ver. 23, our LORD makes a transition, and proceeds to the second part of his reply. He explains that his final Coming, (concerning the *signs* as well as the *time* of which the Disciples had asked Him,) would neither be so remote as to require a journey into "the desert," nor so obscure as to be confined to "the secret chambers;" but would be known from one end of the World unto the other:—

27, 28 For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west, so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be: for wheresoever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together.

This proverbial saying, like so many others employed by our LORD, is not without difficulty. It seems here to imply, that as the place where a carcass has fallen is discoverable at once by the concurrence of birds of prey which troop instantly to the spot,—(for as Job says of the eagle, "her eyes behold a-far off: her young ones also suck up blood; and *where the slain are, there is she.*")(x)—even so, at the end of the World, there will be no doubt or question as to the place *where* CHRIST is to be found.(y) The LAMB which was slain will be discoverable at once by the thousand thousands who will be congregated around Him. Where *He* is, there will the Saints(z) be gathered together.

"The extraordinary instinct in birds of prey," (as one has remarked,) "by which they gather together from all quarters, even from beyond seas, to where a carcass falls, has often been observed as if it were something supernatural. It appears to be Nature's emblem of the manner in which, beyond all that can be accounted for by human reason, the good of all ages and countries flock together round the Body of CHRIST crucified."(a)

At the same time we are disposed to believe that the Divine Speaker shaped his prediction in this striking language not without reference to the victorious eagles of the Roman army which should flock about the many slain of Jerusalem, in the day of her downfall: for the destruction of that city is obviously to be regarded at once as a type and an earnest of that final Coming of CHRIST to take vengeance on his enemies, of which he is here speaking. The capture of Jerusalem by the Romans is foretold by Moses in language truly apposite to the present occasion:

(p) 2 Thess. ii. 1 to 10. Consider however 1 Tim. iv. 1 to 3: 2 Tim. iii. 1 to 5: iv. 1 to 4. 2 St. Peter ii. 1. 1 St. John ii. 18: iv. 1, 3. Jude ver. 17, 18, &c.

(q) Consider such places of prophecy as Mal. iii. 1, 2, 3: Zech. xii. 10: St. Luke xiii. 35.

(r) Consider verses 16 to 18, above: and see the note on St. Mark xiii. 16.

(s) Consider St. Luke xvii. 28 to 32.

(t) 2 St. Peter iii. 12. See also 1 Cor. i. 7. Tit. ii. 13, &c.

(u) St. Matth. xxv. 13. See xxiv. 42, 44. St. Mark xiii. 33, 35. St. Luke xii. 39, 40: xxi. 36. 1 Thess. v. 2. 2 St. Peter iii. 10, &c.

(x) Job xxxix. 29, 30. See also Habakkuk i. 8.

(y) Consider St. Luke xvii. 37.

(z) See Isaiah xl. 31.

(a) Williams.

"The LORD shall bring a nation against thee from far, from the end of the Earth, —as the eagle flieth." (b)

With reference to the days of the Destruction of Jerusalem, and the great tribulation(c) which should then prevail, our LORD proceeds:—

29 Immediately after the tribulation of those days shall the Sun be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light, and the Stars shall fall from Heaven, and the Powers of the heavens shall be shaken:

"Immediately,"—in the sight of GOD: with whom "one day is . . . as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day." (d) But in truth, the word here rendered "immediately," means rather "straightway" or "in due course." Almost eighteen hundred years since the beginning of "those days" have elapsed already; and the end is not yet.

And this is almost all we shall offer on the language or the imagery of the text; the frequent recurrence of which, in the Old Testament, is certainly very remarkable.(e) Its precise meaning, since the events alluded to belong to the department of unfulfilled prophecy, the result must be left to determine. True indeed it is that Sun, Moon, and Stars are often spoken of figuratively,—are sometimes put symbolically for CHRIST, and his Church, and his Saints: true also it is, that, as at our SAVIOUR'S Birth it was foretold that "every valley should be filled, and every mountain and hill should be brought low," (f)—words which do not admit of being understood literally,—so may the present place be rightly explained by those many ancient Fathers who interpret it altogether in a figurative manner. For ourselves, we prefer to take our LORD'S words in the most literal sense they will possibly bear: suggesting only that beneath that literal sense and literal fulfillment, there may lie a mystical intention also.(g) If the Sun "put on mourning" at the Crucifixion, why may he not "be darkened" at the second Advent? But it is safer to meditate on the mysterious predictions of the text, than to pretend to explain them.

30 and then shall appear the Sign of the Son of Man in Heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the Earth mourn,

Thus far is peculiar to the present Gospel. "*The sign of the Son of Man*" is generally explained to be the Cross: but does it mean more than "the Son of Man?" The mourning of "the tribes of the Earth" is from Zechariah xii. 12.

and they shall see the Son of Man coming in the clouds of Heaven with power and great glory.

The Reader should compare this description of CHRIST'S final Advent to judgment, with Daniel vii. 13, and Revelation i. 7.(h) "*Those clouds*," (says Bishop Pearson,) "were anciently expounded by the Jews of the glorious attendance of the Angels waiting upon the Son of Man." (i)

31 And He shall send His Angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of Heaven to the other.

He shall "send forth his Angels;" for these are the ministers of his, that do His pleasure.(k) Moreover there will be "a great sound of a trumpet;" "for the LORD himself shall descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God." (l) "*The four winds*" are spoken of, as there are said to be "four corners of the Earth." (m)

(b) Deut. xxviii. 49. This must not be thought conclusive however: for see Jer. xlviii. 40: xlix. 22. Lam. iv. 19. Ezek. xvii. 3, 12. Hos. viii. 1, in none of which places the Romans are spoken of. (c) See above ver. 21. (d) 2 St. Peter iii. 8.

(e) See Isaiah xlii. 10. Ezek. xxxii. 7. Joel ii. 31, 32: iii. 15, 16. Amos viii. 9. (f) St. Luke iii. 5, from Isaiah xl. 4.

(g) Compare Rev. vi. 12, and especially 14, 13, with Is. xxxiv. 4. See Rev. viii. 10, 11, 12: ix. 1: xii. 1. See also Is. xlii. 13. Heb. xii. 26, 27. Again Dan. xii. 3. 1 Cor. xv. 41, 42. Phil. ii. 15. (h) Also St. Matth. xvi. 27: xxvi. 64.

(i) Compare Heb. xii. 1. (k) Ps. ciii. 21. Consider St. Matth. xlii. 39, 41, 49.

(l) 1 Thess. iv. 16. So 1 Cor. xv. 52.

(m) See Is. xliiii. 5, 6: also St. Matth. viii. 11. Ezek. xxxvii. 9. Zech. ii. 6. Rev. vii. 1.

32, 33 Now learn a parable of the fig tree; when his branch is yet tender and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer *is* nigh: so likewise ye, when ye shall see all these things, know that it is near, *even* at the doors.

Not, "*it is near*," but "*He*," that is, the Judge spoken of in ver. 30, "*is near*." St. James alludes to this place when he says, "Behold, the Judge standeth before the door."⁽ⁿ⁾ The Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark xiii. 29, for some remarks on the preceding verses.

"Thus far, then, CHRIST speaks of the end of the World and its signs, as he had spoken of the Destruction of Jerusalem and its signs. He next proceeds to reveal as much as seems good to Him concerning the time when the two events should respectively take place. Observe that He still speaks of "*these things*," as the words are used in the question put to Him,—namely, as concerning *the Destruction of Jerusalem*, which He had foretold; and by doing so, had caused the question to be put to Him."^(o) His words were,—

34, 35 Verily I say unto you, This generation shall not pass, till all these things be fulfilled. Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away.

This very solemn assurance which is found repeated in all the three Gospels,^(p) clearly had reference to the existing race of the nation which our LORD addressed. See on St. Mark xiii. 31.

Thus far then of "*these things*." Our LORD proceeds to speak of the other Day about which He had been asked,—"*the Day of His Coming*, and of the end of the World." He says,—

36 But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the Angels of Heaven, but My FATHER only.

Concerning this verse, see on St. Mark xiii. 32.

37, 38, 39 But as the days of Noe *were*, so shall also the Coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark, and knew not until the flood came, and took them all away; so shall also the coming of the Son of Man be.

A similar reference to "the days of Noe," as typical of the final overthrow of the World, will be found to have been already made by our LORD on another occasion.^(q) Then, he proceeded to recall the History of Sodom also:^(r) but not now, because the fate of that guilty city has been already brought before us.^(s)

Take notice that it would appear from what precedes, as if, although fearful signs, "are to precede the last Judgment, yet that Day itself will come in a time of thoughtless security; which seems to be intimated by the eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage; and still more so by the buying and selling, planting and building, "as in the days of Lot."^(t)

40, 41 Then shall two be in the field: the one shall be taken, and the other left. Two *women shall be* grinding at the mill; the one shall be taken, and the other left.

Some remarks on this place will be found in the note on St. Luke xvii. 36.

42, 43, 44 Watch therefore: for ye know not what hour your LORD

(n) St. James v. 9. See also Philip. iv. 5.

(o) From a MS. Sermon by the Rev. C. Marriott.

(p) St. Mark xiii. 30, 31. St. Luke xxi. 32, 33.

(q) St. Luke xvii. 26, 27.

(r) St. Luke xvii. 28 to 32.

(s) See above, ver. 16 to 18, where see the notes.

(t) Williams.

doth come. But know this, that if the goodman of the house had known in what watch the thief would come, he would have watched, and would not have suffered his house to be broken up. Therefore be ye also ready: for in such an hour as ye think not the Son of Man cometh.

This warning is of perpetual recurrence,^(u) and of general obligation: but what follows, to the end of the chapter, is addressed more particularly to those who are "made rulers over the Lord's Household."^(x) The place is to be compared with a portion of St. Luke's twelfth chapter; of which, ver. 38 will be found a fitting introduction to ver. 42, above; while verses 39 and 40 of St. Luke correspond with verses 43 and 44 of the present chapter. A question asked by St. Peter follows in St. Luke's Gospel,—"*LORD, speakest Thou this Parable unto us, or even to all?*"^(y)—out of which naturally arise the sayings which are found in the ensuing seven verses of the present chapter, and which also occur in St. Luke.^(z) This must be allowed to be a very surprising circumstance; well deserving of our most reverent attention.

45, 46, 47 Who then is a faithful and wise Servant, whom his Lord hath made ruler over his Household, to give them meat in due season? Blessed is that servant, whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing. Verily I say unto you, That he shall make him ruler over all His goods.

Every word here is suggestive. Take notice that he who is set over the Household, is but a Servant, after all: and of him it is required that he be not only faithful, but wise also. To zeal there must be added discretion. A "ruler" he is; yet what is his office? Even, like a good Pastor, to feed the sheep and the little lambs of Christ's fold,^(a) giving to each the "milk" or the "strong meat,"^(b) "*in due season:*" "seasonably dispensing the Word of Life to a Household which is to be nourished with the food of Eternity."^(c) What words shall describe the blessedness of the "servant whom his Lord when he cometh shall find so doing?" "Well done, thou good and faithful servant," (it will be said;) "thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!"^(d)—words which recall, if they do not help to explain, what is read above, in ver. 47.

48, 49, 50, 51 But and if that evil servant shall say in his heart, My Lord delayeth His coming: and shall begin to smite *his* fellow-servants, and to eat and drink with the drunken: the Lord of that servant shall come in a day when he looketh not for *Him*, and in an hour that he is not aware of, and shall cut him asunder, and appoint *him* his portion with the hypocrites: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Concerning the last words, see the end of the note on St. Matthew viii. 12. With those which precede, compare 2 St. Peter iii. 3 to 10.—Take notice that Teachers of the Gospel are here addressed; who, if they neglect their duty, will have the same punishment as those who pretended to believe, but were in fact "unbelievers."^(e) Then follows the parable of "the wise and foolish Virgins,"—which is again succeeded by the parable of "the Talents." Both are fitly introduced by the word of exhortation which is found above in ver. 42; or by that which St. Mark preserves in this place,—"*And what I say unto you, I say unto all,—Watch!*"^(f)

(u) See above, the latter part of the notes on ver. 26, together with the reference.

(x) See below, ver. 45; also 1 Cor. iv. 1, 2: Tit. i. 7: 1 St. Peter iv. 10.

(y) St. Luke xii. 41.

(z) St. Luke xii. 42 to 46.

(a) St. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

(b) Heb. v. 12, 14.

(c) Hilary.

(d) St. Matth. xxv. 21.

(e) St. Luke xii. 46.

(f) St. Mark xiii. 37.

CHAPTER XXV.

1 *The parable of the Ten Virgins.* 14 *And of the Talents.* 31 *Also the description of the last Judgment.*

THE parable of "the Ten Virgins" with which the present chapter begins, and which is peculiar to the present Gospel, sets forth and enforces the duty of *Watchfulness*; taking up the solemn train of Exhortation with which the preceding chapter concludes. CHRIST is here the Bridegroom, while the Church, (as throughout the Song of Solomon,) is His Bride. This image has come before us repeatedly, already: in truth it gives a colour to the language both of the Old and the New Testament.^(a) The time spoken of is *the End*,—whether of Life, or of the World. It need not perplex us that the Church, here, is represented both by the Bride and the Virgins; for, as all must perceive, and as we have so often remarked, neither Type nor Parable may be so pressed as if it were the very thing it signified. It is also to be observed that, as if to preclude any confusion of thought, the Bride is not once mentioned throughout the present Parable. We should ever in expounding a Parable, hold fast, throughout, the Lesson which it was chiefly intended to convey; and concerning which we are seldom left in doubt.^(b)

Then shall the Kingdom of Heaven be likened unto ten Virgins, which took their lamps, and went forth to meet the Bridegroom.

This is scarcely intelligible without reference to the method of performing the Marriage Rite among the Jews. The Bride was conducted at evening by the Bridegroom from her Father's House to his own,—where a Feast awaited their arrival: and this act of bringing the Bride home, was the completion of the Marriage. She was attended by a company of Virgins, according to the allusion in the 45th Psalm;^(c) and it is plain from the course of the present narrative, that it was the office of at least some of these to wait for the approach of the Bridal procession,—even though its arrival might be delayed till midnight. But it was at least dark; so that the Virgins were perforce furnished with lamps.

Ten Virgins do not so much represent the whole body of Christian men who expect CHRIST'S Coming, as two great sections of Believers.^(d)—The Jews saw a singular propriety in the number ten, which was the number of "a company." Virgins are named,—because as many as wait for the LORD JESUS CHRIST, and profess to "love His appearing,"^(e) are professors of a pure Faith.

2 And five of them were wise, and five were foolish.

The two characters which were contrasted at the end of our LORD'S Sermon on the Mount, are thus brought before us.^(f) Take notice that *three out of four* suffer loss in the Parable of "the Sower:" while here, *half* are rejected: in the parable of "the Talents," it is *one in three*: in the parable of "the Pounds," it is *one in ten*:^(g) while, in the parable of "the Marriage of the King's Son," it is *one out of an infinite number*.^(h) The intention of this seems to have been to repress the inquiry, "Lord, are there few that be saved?"⁽ⁱ⁾

(a) See the notes on St. Matt. xxii. 3: St. John iii. 1, &c.

(b) Consider St. Matthew xx. 16, and the note prefixed to that chapter: St. Luke xviii. 1, and 9. See also below, ver 13.

(d) See below, the last note on ver. 4.

(f) See St. Matth. vii. 24, 26.

(h) St. Matth. xxii. 11.

(c) Ps. xlv. 14, 15.

(e) 2 Tim. iv. 8.

(g) St. Luke xix. 13, 20.

(i) St. Luke xiii. 23.

3, 4 They that *were* foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them: but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps.

In this, then, consisted their wisdom or their folly. It has been much disputed what is implied by the supply of oil spoken of here, and in verse 9. But surely we may be content with the explanation which most obviously presents itself. To "have our loins girded about, and *our lights burning*, and to be ourselves like unto men that wait for their LORD when He will return from the Wedding,"—is the injunction delivered by CHRIST Himself to His Church.^(k) Elsewhere, the Saints are termed the Light of the World:^(l) they are compared to a lighted lamp or candle;^(m) and they are commanded to "let their light shine before men."⁽ⁿ⁾ It is clear that men's "sufficiency," in all these respects, "is of God."^(o) The gifts and graces of the SPIRIT, (of which *Oil* hath ever been an essential symbol),^(p) are evidently the Light we have to display. Nor will it suffice to exhibit this spectacle for a few days or hours. The lamp must be replenished, (as man has need of daily renewal,) or its flames will grow feeble, and at last expire.

Negligence, therefore, in obtaining supplies of grace,—a slothful service,—is clearly *that* against which the present Parable is specially intended as a warning. We shall read the same lesson in the Parable "of the Talents," which follows; and in the Parable of "the Pounds," which St. Luke records. A solemn warning, surely, to as many as imagine that nothing but open Sin will exclude from acceptance with God. The fault of the five foolish Virgins was, not that they had *no* oil, but that they had *not enough*; so that, at the end of a few hours, they were left in darkness. As already remarked, therefore, it is not so much *the whole body* of the Church which is represented by these two companies of Virgins, as the earnest and careful, on the one hand,—the slothful and careless, on the other. And observe, the foolish Virgins were not distinguishable from the wise, at first. Like the Tares among the wheat,^(q) and the House described at the end of our LORD's Sermon on the Mount,^(r) the outward show of all was equally promising, when they went forth to meet the Bridegroom. But he delayed his coming; and—

5 While the Bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept.

The meaning of the original is that from a state of *drowsiness*, they fell into sound *slumber*. They expected the Bridegroom,—who hath now tarried for more than eighteen hundred years. Meanwhile, first one, then another falls asleep;^(s) and even those few who shall be alive at CHRIST's coming, since they will be taken by surprise, may be spoken of as roused from slumber by the Bridegroom's approach. Sleep moreover is the condition of too many at all times; whence the Apostolic Exhortation,—"*Now is it high time to wako out of sleep, for now is our Salvation nearer than when we believed.*"^(t)

6 And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the Bridegroom cometh; go ye out to meet Him.

"A cry,"—for the LORD "will descend from Heaven with a shout, with the voice of the Archangel, and with the trump of God."^(u) And this takes place "*at midnight*," (when a loud cry sounds loudest!)—because "the Day of the LORD so cometh as a thief *in the night*,"^(v)—and because CHRIST will appear "*in an hour when Men look not for Him*."^(y) But there is no reason why we should doubt that CHRIST will come at midnight, literally.

7 Then all those Virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps.

But five of them "trimmed their lamps" to no purpose. It was useless to raise and cleanse the wick, unless they had wherewith to feed the expiring flames

(k) St. Luke xii. 35, 36.

(l) St. Matth. v. 14. Compare Phil. ii. 15.

(m) St. Matth. v. 15, and St. Mark iv. 21, (where see the notes.)

(n) St. Matth. v. 16. Consider Job xviii. 6: xxi. 17.

(o) 2 Cor. iii. 5.

(p) Consider Exod. xxx. 25 to 31. Zech. iv. 11 to 14. Heb. i. 9. 1 St. John ii. 20, 27, &c.

(q) See the first note on St. Matth. xii. 24.

(r) See the first note on St. Luke vi. 49.

(s) Consider St. Matth. ix. 24, St. John xi. 11. 1 Cor. xv. 18, &c. &c. (t) Rom. xii. 11.

(u) 1 Thess. iv. 16.

(v) 1 Thess. v. 2.

(y) See St. Matth. xxiv. 44, 50, and St. Luke xii. 46.

also . . . The hasty preparation of the soul in the great and terrible day, to meet its God,^(z) is here obscurely hinted. Thrice happy he, who in that dreadful hour shall prove, like the Spouse in the 45th Psalm, "all glorious *within*!"^(a)

8 And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil; for our lamps are gone out.

Or rather, "*are going out*,"—as in the margin. Little hand-lamps are spoken of, calculated to burn for a very short time. At the beginning, *all* were bright; but the Bridegroom had delayed his return from the Wedding, and the slender supply of oil was by this time exhausted . . . The miserable wish of the wicked, in the last day, (miserable, because so unavailing!) to supply their own lack of Light from the brightness of the just,—who will then be about to "shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father,"^(b)—is here foretold.

9 But the wise answered, saying, *Not so*: lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves.

They answer abruptly and briefly, for the time is short: not unkindly, but humbly. Their answer implies, first, that there is no superfluous stock of merit among the Saints, which may be applied to remedy the shortcomings of the less holy sort, "lest," (in the words of the Parable,) "there be *not enough* for us and you." Nay, "there is none that doeth good, no, not one;"^(c) but "when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants."^(d) Next, it is implied that he who *needs*, must *buy*;^(e) and further, that he who would *buy*, must not look to his fellow-men,—to beings, weak and poor, and dependent as himself,—but must "go to those who *sell*:" to Him, in short, who alone hath an ample store, and who inviteth all to come and buy of Him; without money indeed and without price,^(f) yet not without earnest prayer and hearty endeavour. How fruitlessly those who, in their lifetime, have neglected opportunities, will seek to repair the omission "in the hour of Death and in the Day of Judgment,"—the conclusion of the Parable sets forth in calm but fearful language.

10 And while they went to buy, the Bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with Him to the Marriage: and the door was shut.

Concerning the shut door, the Reader is referred to the last note on St. Luke xi. 7. The phrase "they that were *ready*," supplies, as it were, the key-note of the Parable; and connects it closely with the warnings of the former chapter,—particularly with *that* in verse 44. But how shall language adequately suggest what is implied concerning the happiness of those who having waited long for their Lord, at last "went in with Him to the Marriage?" "Mysterious and blissful words!" (exclaims a pious Writer;) "Here is the union of Earth with Heaven; the consummation of all spiritual joys, which eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive. Here is 'the Marriage supper of the Lamb,'^(g) the Marriage feast which has been so often spoken of,—where is the good wine which the Heavenly Bridegroom hath kept to the last!"^(h) . . . Thither are "the Wise" admitted: "the foolish," excluded from the festive scene, find themselves in "outer darkness;"⁽ⁱ⁾ and this "near miss of happiness," (as Leighton remarks,) "is the greatest misery."

11, 12 Afterward came also the other Virgins, saying, LORD, LORD, open to us. But He answered and said, Verily I say unto you, I know you not.

Even thus, "Many, I say unto you, will seek to enter in, and shall not be able. When once the Master of the House . . . hath shut to the door, and ye begin to

(z) See Amos iv. 12.

(b) St. Matth. xiii. 43.

(d) St. Luke xvii. 10. Consider 1 St. Peter iv. 18.

(e) Consider St. Matth. xiii. 44 and 46.

(h) Williams.

(a) Ps. xlv. 13. Consider St. Luke xi. 36, &c.

(c) Ps. xiv. 3, quoted in Rom. iii. 12.

(f) Is. lv. 1.

(g) Rev. xix. 9.

(i) See the notes on St. Matth. viii. 11 and 12.

stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, LORD, LORD, open unto us: and He shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are.”(k)

Our SAVIOUR CHRIST is said not to “know” those whom He doth not *approve*, and acknowledge to be his. Consider St. Matthew vii. 23, where see the note.—The knowledge thus hinted at is not only deep and intimate, but mutual also.(l) The Door is now set wide open, and all are invited, almost compelled to come in;(m) but the day of Probation comes to an end, and the Door is then shut,—never more to be opened.(n) “No one’s penitence, no one’s prayer, no one’s groaning, shall any more be admitted. That door is shut which received Aaron after his Idolatry,—which admitted David after his Adultery and Homicide; which not only did not repel Peter after his threefold denial, but even delivered the keys to him.”(o)

What then is the sum of the matter? “The Day of the LORD so cometh as a thief in the night . . . Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.”(p) And so it follows,

13 Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of Man cometh.

“Neither the day nor the hour:” as it is also said elsewhere.(q) And with these words, our Blessed LORD concludes his Parable.

“The Virgins were represented above, as *waiting* for their LORD; while in the Parable which follows, we behold the Servants *working* for Him:—*there*, the inward spiritual rest of the Christian was described,—*here*, his external activity.”(r)

The Parable of “the Talents,” to which our attention is next directed, resembles in many respects the Parable of “the Pounds;” but the two are wholly distinct. While St. Matthew alone gives the present Parable, the other is found to be peculiar to St. Luke’s Gospel.(s)

14, 15 For the Kingdom of Heaven is as a Man travelling into a far country, who called his own servants, and delivered unto them his goods. And unto one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to every man according to his several ability; and straightway took his journey.

Even so CHRIST, when He returned to the FATHER, “gave some, Apostles; and some, Prophets; and some, Evangelists; and some, Pastors and Teachers,” &c.:(t) for “there are diversities of gifts, but the same SPIRIT.”(u) And take notice, that as we are elsewhere reminded that “all these worketh that one and the selfsame SPIRIT, dividing unto every man severally as He will,”(x) so are we here assured that to every man He giveth “according to his several ability.” Every one, therefore, is entrusted with as many advantages, as many of God’s gifts, as he is able to bear; and from this Parable we have learned to call one class of those gifts by the very name of “Talents.”

The contrast between the present Parable and that of “the Pounds,” begins immediately to strike us; for, in the other, the sum entrusted to each servant was one and the same.(y)

16, 17 Then he that had received the five talents went and traded with the same, and made *them* other five talents. And likewise he that *had received* two, he also gained other two.

Surely, the calling of the Merchant and the Banker hath been ennobled by the use to which the LORD of Heaven and Earth applies it!

The contrast already noticed continues to strike us. Instead of the *same* sum multiplied in *different* proportions, we are here presented with *different* sums which multiply in the *same* proportion. One of the servants in St. Luke’s Parable, who

(k) St. Luke xiii. 24, 25.

(l) Consider St. John x. 14. 2 Tim. ii. 19. See also Phil. iii. 10.

(m) See St. St. Luke xiv. 21 to 23.

(n) From an ancient Homily, quoted by Trench.

(o) St. Matth. xxiv. 50, and St. Luke xii. 16.

(p) St. Luke xix. 12 to 27.

(q) 1 Cor. xii. 11.

(r) Consider St. Luke xix. 41, 42; also xvi. 26.

(s) 1 Thess. v. 2, 6.

(t) Trench.

(u) 1 Cor. xii. 4.

(y) St. Luke xix. 13.

had a pound entrusted to him, comes before his Lord, saying, "Lord, thy pound hath gained ten pounds;" and another, who had been entrusted with the same sum, announces a gain of "five." But here, the gain is in exact proportion to the sum entrusted: the five talents have grown into "other five;" and the two, into two more. Thus, while St. Luke's Parable reminds us that in spiritual matters, as in temporal, splendid success may be the result of strenuous exertion and bold "ventures of Faith," St. Matthew's sets forth the equally important truth, that to whomsoever God hath entrusted much, of them he will require the more.^(z) Three classes of men are exhibited by the Parable of "the Pounds:"^(a) only two by the Parable of "the Talents."

18 But he that had received one, went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money.

How striking is the warning here conveyed; and which seems specially addressed to those censorious ones, who, lamenting their own limited opportunities, *neglect* them also! It is discovered that the servants who were entrusted with the ten talents and the five, fully availed themselves of *their* advantages. Not so "he that had received *one*." He alone it was who did nothing: but "went and digged in the earth, and hid his Lord's money!" . . . "*His Lord's* money," not his own; for it was their Lord's goods which were distributed among them."^(b)

And yet it may well be thought strange that the parable should run thus: for certainly every man's experience must rather suggest the belief that large opportunities are often misused or neglected; while an inferior stewardship is more commonly turned to excellent account. But does not the force of the warning perhaps consist in *this*,—namely, that *every* man, whatever may be his opportunities of serving God, is prone to look upon those opportunities as small, compared with those of others? to assume that *he* has been entrusted with only "*one* Talent?" The man of business persuades himself that want of leisure is what makes him unfruitful; he who is unfettered by business, on the contrary, attributes all his faults to his idleness. The man of fortune, because he finds that he moves among temptations, discourses of *virtuous poverty*; and is convinced that Virtue may be easily practised in a cottage. Surrounded by just as many temptations, (though of a wholly different kind,) the poor man reckons up all the miracles of goodness he would certainly perform, if he had but the means! . . . It ever hath been, it ever will be so.

19, 20 After a long time the Lord of those servants cometh, and reckoneth with them. And so he that had received five talents came and brought other five talents, saying, Lord, Thou deliveredst unto me five talents: behold, I have gained beside them five talents more.

The language is not the same which invites our attention in St. Luke xix. 16.

21 His Lord said unto him, Well done, *thou* good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

He had been "*good*," as well as "*faithful*,"—showing his *Faith* by his *Works*:^(c) and great was his reward,—"*Enter thou into the joy of thy Lord!*" for, "in *His* presence, there is fullness of joy."^(d) "It is but little we can receive here," (says Leighton, beautifully;) "*some drops of Joy that enter into us: but there, we shall enter into Joy,—as vessels put into a Sea of Happiness.*"

22, 23 He also that had received two talents came and said, Lord, Thou deliveredst unto me two talents: behold, I have gained two other talents beside them. His Lord said unto him, Well done, good and faithful servant; thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord.

(z) See St. Luke xii. 48.

(b) Williams.

(d) Psalm xvi. 11. Compare xxi. 6.

(a) See the note on St. Luke xix. 19.

(c) St. James ii. 14 to 26.

"In the joyful coming forward of the faithful Servants, we see an example of 'boldness in the Day of Judgment.'(e) They had something to show."(f)

24, 25 'Then he which had received the one talent came and said, Lord, I knew Thee that Thou art an hard man, reaping where Thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not strawed: and I was afraid, and went and hid Thy talent in the earth: lo, *there* Thou hast *that is* Thine.

"If only he may roll off a charge from himself, he cares not for affixing one on his Lord." The churl regards his Lord as churlish also; "for every one's thoughts of God are according to his own character. The just man apprehends His Justice; the merciful man, His Mercy; the pure in heart, His Holiness. But the wicked man judges of God according to his own wickedness."(g)

He has hard thoughts of him, as if he were such an one as himself;(h) and "does not believe in his gracious acceptance of the work with all its faults, which was done with a sincere desire to please Him."(i)

26, 27 His Lord answered and said unto him, *Thou* wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not strawed: thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers, and *then* at My coming I should have received Mine own with usury.

That is,—Thou knowest (sayest thou) that I am unfair in my dealings, and unreasonable in my expectations: shouldst thou not then have been the more scrupulous and painstaking? If thou wert incapable of undertaking any of those bolder ventures of Faith, which, for every hundred embarked, yield a hundred more,—wherefore didst thou not at least avail thyself of one of those ordinary methods of investment which yield *some* increase, however small? Tell me not of risk and insecurity. The principal sum, with its increase, I would have come and claimed, in person. The risk would have been all my own. . . . Take notice that "Usury" is the old word for "Interest."

"Those timid natures which are not suited to independent labour in the Kingdom of God are here counselled at least to attach themselves to other stronger characters, under whose leading they may lay out their gifts to the service of the Church."(k)

28 Take therefore the talent from him, and give *it* unto him which hath ten talents.

For "the privileges and gifts of God are not lost, but transferred from him that has abused them to one more worthy: from Esau to Jacob, from Saul to David, from Judas Iscariot to St. Matthias, from Israel to the Gentiles."(l) "Hold fast that which thou hast," (saith the Spirit,) "that no man *take thy crown*."(m)

The striking resemblance of the five preceding verses to as many in the parable of "the Pounds" in St. Luke's Gospel, will be found pointed out in a note on St. Luke xix. 24.

29 For unto every one that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance: but from him that hath not shall be taken away even that which he hath.

This saying will be found fully discussed in the Commentary on St. Mark iv. 25. See also on Matthew xiii. 12.

30 And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

(e) 1 St. John iv. 17.

(g) Williams.

(k) Olshausen.

(f) Consider 1 Thess. ii. 19.

(h) Psalm l. 21.

(i) Williams.

Compare 2 Cor. i. 14, and Phil. v. 1.

(l) Trench.

(m) Rev. iii. 11.

What this expression denotes, may be discovered by a comparison of St. Matthew viii. 12, and xxii. 13, (n) with xiii. 42 and 50.

This then is the doom of "the *unprofitable servant*;" whose sins were those of *omission*, not of *commission*. What severity of Judgment must therefore await the man who lustfully squanders the talent committed to his keeping; if "outer darkness" is the punishment of him who slothfully buries it in the Earth! (o)

What (once more) is the sum of the matter? "Having then gifts, differing according to the grace that is given to us, whether Prophecy, let us prophesy according to the proportion of Faith; or Ministry, let us wait on our ministering; or he that teacheth, on teaching," &c. In fine, "not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the LORD." (p)

Then follows a very remarkable passage, which ends the chapter; and may be considered, in some sort, as the solemn Commentary of the SPIRIT on the two parables which precede.

31 When the Son of Man shall come in his Glory, and all the holy Angels with Him,

Alluding to the language of Zechariah xiv. 5. As He appeared on Sinai, (q) so will He appear at the end of the world. (r) This is what is meant by that "coming in the clouds," of which the Prophet Daniel, our LORD himself, and the beloved Disciple speak. (s) "Those clouds," (says Bp. Pearson,) "were anciently expounded by the Jews of the glorious attendance of the Angels waiting upon the Son of Man." (t) When He cometh,—

32, 33 then shall He sit upon the throne of His Glory: and before Him shall be gathered all nations: and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth *his* sheep from the goats: and He shall set the sheep on His Right Hand, but the goats on the Left.

The remark has been already made, (u) that under such images, the Heavenly Husbandman delights to discourse of his dealings with his people. There seems to be a reference here to the language of Ezekiel xxxiv. 17. Concerning "the Right" as the place of Honour, see the note on St. Luke i. 11.

34, 35, 36 Then shall the King say unto them on His Right Hand, Come, ye blessed of my FATHER, inherit the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World: for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me in: naked, and ye clothed Me: I was sick, and ye visited Me: I was in prison, and ye came unto Me.

Of all the Christian graces, the grace of Mercy is singled out in this striking manner, as if to be the type of all the rest: and the six Acts of Mercy thus specified *four times* in succession, are,—Feeding the Hungry, Giving Drink to the Thirsty, Receiving the Stranger, Clothing the Naked, Visiting the Sick, and Going after the Prisoners.

This enumeration of the actions on which the Decision of the Great and Terrible Day is described as depending, will be regarded as a very striking circumstance,—when it is considered that they are such acts as a heretic and unbeliever might practise. One reason why so much stress is laid upon them may be, that, (unlike martyrdom and acts of heroic virtue,) they are within the reach of all. "And although a man may give all his goods to feed the poor, and yet not have Charity;" yet he can scarcely practise these works consistently, without Charity, or the Love of CHRIST: they are of themselves the best preparation of the heart to receive that love: and although persons may practise all these, and yet admit false doctrine from unavoidable ignorance, yet, if they practise them conscientiously, and as

(n) See the remarks on St. Matthew viii. 11 and 12.

(o) Augustine.

(p) Rom. xii. 6, 7, 11.

(q) Deut. xxxiii. 2.

(r) See St. Matth. xvi. 27. 1 Thess. iii. 13, and 2 Thess. i. 7. Also St. Jude 14.

(s) Dan. vii. 13, alluded to in St. Matth. xxiv. 30 and xxvi. 64; Rev. i. 7.

(t) Consider the expression in Heb. xii. 1.

(u) See the note on St. Mark iii. 17.

CHRIST has commanded them to be done, they indicate such a love for the Truth that they will receive it when it is brought before them.

37, 38, 39 Then shall the Righteous answer Him, saying, LORD, when saw we Thee an hungered, and fed *Thee*? or thirsty, and gave *Thee* drink? when saw we Thee a stranger, and took *Thee* in? or naked, and clothed *Thee*? or when saw we Thee sick, or in prison, and came unto Thee?

The surprise they are made to testify, expresses in a lively manner the feeling of wonder with which the Righteous will hear their Divine Master's recognition of their virtuous endeavors, "in that Day." See more below, in the note on ver. 44.

40 And the King shall answer and say unto them, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done *it* unto one of the least of these My Brethren, ye have done it unto Me.

So entirely does our Great Head identify himself with the very least of these His members! (x)

41 Then shall He say also unto them on the Left Hand, Depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting Fire, prepared for the Devil and his angels:

Note the contrast between what is said of "Everlasting Fire," in this verse, and what is stated in verse 34 concerning "the Kingdom." That Kingdom was prepared "before the foundation of the World:" not so, the pains of Hell. The misery of *any* of His creatures formed no part of God's *design* in Creation. But Man's Happiness, on the contrary, *was* designed from the beginning: "inherit," it is said, (that is, take as your right,) (y) "the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the World." "Everlasting Fire," though it is the portion of the disobedient, was "prepared" only "for the Devil and his angels."

42, 43 for I was an hungered, and ye gave Me no meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave Me no drink: I was a stranger, and ye took Me not in: naked, and ye clothed Me not: sick, and in prison, and ye visited Me not.

Take notice, (for it is very striking,) what was the character of the heavy sin of those on the left:—not acts of cruelty, or deeds of lust: not disobedience, or dishonesty: not evil speaking, or covetousness: no great crime, in a word, or open vice. It consisted altogether in *omissions* and *neglects*. Lazarus had hungered, and they had given him no meat. Their "lamps" had gone out. They had buried their "Talent" in the earth,—had hid their "Pound" in a napkin. They had led selfish lives. They were unprofitable Servants.

"It is to be observed how, in this description our LORD dwells expressly and minutely on each particular by itself: He was hungry,—thirsty,—a stranger,—naked,—sick,—and in prison. Perhaps this implies that great particularity of the Judgment, which is elsewhere signified by the intimation that 'even a cup of cold water given for His sake, shall not lose its reward:' (z) and that 'God shall bring every work into Judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good or whether it be evil:' (a) and that for every idle word, men shall give account in the Day of Judgment." (b)

44 Then shall they also answer Him, saying, LORD, when saw we

(x) Consider Acts ix. 4. The same gracious assurance is met with in St. Matthew x. 40: xviii. 5, St. Luke x. 16, St. John xiii. 20: and in St. Matthew x. 42, and St. Mark ix. 41, it is promised that the slightest acts of Mercy performed in time, shall in no wise lose their reward throughout the ages of Eternity. "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have showed towards His Name, in that ye have ministered to the Saints, and do minister." Heb. vi. 9.

(y) See St. Matth. v. 5, and the note there. Compare Rom. viii. 16, 17.

(z) St. Matth. x. 42. (a) Eccles. xii. 14. (b) Williams,—quoting St. Matth. xii. 36.

Thee an hungered, or athirst, or a stranger, or naked, or sick, or in prison, and did not minister unto Thee?

"The Righteous, in their answer,(c) dwelt on each particular; in respect of each, finding themselves wanting. Whereas the unrighteous, in their reply, pass over all these neglected duties in a more summary, self-confident way."(d)

Self-confidence, indeed, constitutes a remarkable feature in the character of all those whom God rejects. Samson, after his broken vow, says, "I will go out as at other times before. . . . And he wist not that the LORD was departed from him."(e) "Blessed be thou of the LORD," says Saul to Samuel, after his act of disobedience: "I have performed the commandment of the LORD."(f) Gehazi, after his villany, "went in, and stood before his master."(g) "Have we not prophesied in Thy Name?" is the inquiry of them "that work iniquity," in the Sermon on the Mount.(h) The unprofitable servant in the parable of "the Pounds" comes forward without fear.(i) The Pharisee hesitates not to set himself above the Publican.(k) The guest unprovided with a wedding garment, takes his place at the Supper without concern.(l) "On the contrary, they who are accepted of CHRIST, are full of misgiving, and scarce believe their own acceptance, in the greatness of their surprise and sense of unworthiness."(m)

45 Then shall He answer them, saying, Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye did *it* not to one of the least of these, ye did *it* not to Me. And these shall go away into Everlasting punishment: but the righteous into Life Eternal.

Concerning the Eternity of future Rewards and Punishments, see the notes on St. Mark ix. 48.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1 *The rulers conspire against CHRIST.* 6 *The woman anointeth His head.* 14 *Judas selleth Him.* 17 *CHRIST eateth the Passover.* 26 *Instituteth His Holy Supper.* 36 *Prayeth in the Garden.* 47 *And being betrayed with a kiss.* 57 *Is carried to Caiaphas.* 69 *And denied of Peter.*

It will be remembered that the 24th chapter was occupied by our LORD's prophecy concerning the Destruction of Jerusalem and the end of the World: the 25th, by His Parables of "the wise and foolish Virgins," and of "the Talents;" together with a picture of the Son of Man sitting "upon the Throne of His Glory." Our SAVIOUR who has hitherto been exhibited as our Great Prophet and Teacher, is now about to reveal Himself as our Great High Priest.

1, 2 AND it came to pass, when JESUS had finished all these sayings, He said unto His Disciples, Ye know that after two days is *the feast of the Passover*, and the Son of Man is betrayed to be crucified.

"Ye know,"—for He had forewarned them.(a) But by the form of His present address, He directs their attention to that fulfillment of the Law which was to take place in His person. St. Paul expresses this in three words,—"*CHRIST our Pass-over*"(b) It is not needful in this place to enter into any account of the Pas-

(c) See above, verses 37, 38, 39.

(f) 1 Sam. xv. 13.

(i) St. Luke xix. 20.

(m) Williams.

(d) Williams.

(g) 2 Kings v. 25.

(k) St. Luke xviii. 11.

(a) See St. Matthew xx. 17 to 19.

(e) Judges xvi. 20.

(h) St. Matth. vii. 22.

(l) St. Matth. xxii. 11, 12.

(b) 1 Cor. v. 7.

chal ceremony; (c) but it is right to observe how plain a type was the Paschal victim of "the LAMB of God, which taketh away the sin of the World;" (d) Not only did the manner of roasting the Lamb represent the affixing of a man to the cross; but the very command concerning the Passover foretold the manner of CHRIST'S Death: for the direction not to "break a bone thereof," (e) having reference to Him, clearly implied that the SAVIOUR of the World should suffer that death to which the breaking of the bones belonged; and that, according to the constant custom in Judea, was Crucifixion. (f)

The words of our LORD in ver. 2, are therefore none other than a great Prophecy;—where delivered, we know not; but most probably at Bethany, whither He certainly proceeded after the sayings with which the preceding chapter concluded. Take notice how the predictions which our SAVIOUR delivered concerning His own approaching Death and Passion increase in clearness as the event approaches, (g) until He actually fixes *the very day* on which He is to suffer, and *the person* who is to betray Him. (h)

3, 4, 5 Then assembled together the chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders of the people, unto the palace of the High Priest, who was called Caiaphas, and consulted that they might take JESUS by subtilty and kill Him. But they said, Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.

Rather, "Not in the Feast;" that is, during the seven days it lasted.—Thus did "the rulers take council together, against the LORD, and against His Anointed." (i) But their purpose was in part frustrated by the sudden proposal of Judas to deliver his Master into their hands; whereby, not only during the Feast, but on the great day of the Feast, in fulfillment of many an ancient type and prophecy, our SAVIOUR suffered. The Council's dread of an outbreak of the populace reminds us of the statement that "the common people heard Him gladly," (k) and hung with delight and attention on His words; (l) clearly showing that the Holy One had "much people" in Jerusalem, (m) though they durst not confess Him.

Then follows a beautiful incident, (the Supper at Bethany,) which belongs however to an earlier day,—and is accordingly referred to its actual historical place by St. John in his Gospel. (n) Both St. Matthew and St. Mark, however, agree in relating the transaction here: and it is because they are about to describe the part which the Traitor took in the conspiracy of the chief Priests, Scribes, and Elders; and wish us to connect the treachery of Judas, (the account of which follows in verse 14,) with the covetous spirit he manifested when the ointment was poured on our SAVIOUR'S Head. (o) The reader is referred to the third paragraph of the note on St. Luke iii. 20.

6 Now when JESUS was in Bethany, in the house of Simon the leper,

That is, of Simon who *had been* a leper: for with a leprous person none might eat. How this man was related to Lazarus and his sisters,—or indeed, if he was related at all,—is not known.

7 There came unto Him a woman having an alabaster box of very precious ointment, and poured it on His head, as He sat at meat.

Ignatius, first Bishop of Antioch, remarks that "the LORD received the myrrh upon His head in order to breathe into His Church incorruption."

8, 9 But when His Disciples saw it, they had indignation, saying, To what purpose is this waste? for this ointment might have been sold for much, and given to the poor.

The chief speaker is found to have been Judas Iscariot. (p) The "Woman" was

(c) See Exod. xii. 1 to 27 and 43 to 49: Deut. xvi. 1 to 8.

(d) St. John i. 29.

(e) Exod. xii. 46.

(f) From Bp. Pearson.

(g) Examine the following texts: St. Matth. xvi. 21: xvii. 22, 23: St. Mark x. 33, 34,—where see the notes.

(h) See below the note on ver. 21.

(i) Ps. ii. 2.

(k) St. Mark xii. 37.

(l) St. Luke xix. 48.

(m) Acts xviii. 10.

(n) St. John xii. 1 to 8.

(o) See St. John xii. 4, 5.

(p) St. John xii. 4.

Mary, the sister of Lazarus, (who was one of the guests,) and of Martha, who waited upon her LORD as He sat at meat.(g)

10, 11, 12, 13 When JESUS understood *it*, He said unto them, Why trouble ye the woman? for she hath wrought a good work upon Me. For ye have the poor always with you; but Me ye have not always. For in that she hath poured this ointment on My Body, she did *it* for My burial. Verily I say unto you, wheresoever this Gospel shall be preached in the whole world, *there* shall also this, that this woman hath done, be told for a memorial of her.

These memorable words are found only in the two first Gospels, and their singular fulfillment has been noticed in every age of the Church. The Reader will find a few remarks on the foregoing incident in the Commentary on St. Mark's Gospel:(r) but he is chiefly referred to the notes on St. John.

"Then" (says St. Luke) "entered Satan into Judas surnamed Iscariot, being of the number of the Twelve."(s) It follows:

14, 15 Then one of the Twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went unto the chief priests, and said *unto them*, What will ye give me, and I will deliver Him unto you? And they covenanted with him for thirty pieces of silver.

"I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price *thirty pieces* of silver."(t) So had it been said five hundred years before! Judas leaves the chief Priests to name the price for which he shall betray the Holy One into their hands; and they set upon Him the price of a slave.(u) Thus the Traitor discovers that he has to do with persons covetous and vile as himself.

Consider how, not only in Prophecy but in Type also, this tremendous crime had been shadowed forth long before. Thus, when Joseph was sold by his brethren into Egypt, "Come," (another Judas had said,) "let us sell him." "And they lifted up Joseph out of the pit, and sold Joseph to the Ishmeelites for twenty pieces of silver."(x) The difference of the sum may have arisen out of the difference of the age of the victim in either case. Joseph was 17 years old when his brethren conspired against him. Now the Law in a certain place runs thus: "from *five even unto twenty years old*, thy estimation shall be of the male *twenty shekels*."(y)

16 And from that time he sought opportunity to betray him.

That is,—"*in the absence of the multitude*."(z) And here we lose sight of the Traitor, and his accursed enterprise, until he asks the question "Is it I?" at the Paschal Supper.(a) What precedes took place on Wednesday in the week of our LORD's Passion. The whole interval, until Thursday evening, seems to have been spent by our LORD and His Eleven Disciples, at Bethany, in deep retirement: nor is anything related concerning either Him or them throughout that period, except what is contained in the next three verses.

17 Now the first *day* of the *feast of unleavened bread* the Disciples came to JESUS, saying unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we prepare for Thee to eat the Passover?

For our LORD kept the Jewish feasts with religious punctuality. Rightly to understand this inquiry of the Disciples, it must be remembered that the preparation for eating the Passover was a work of labour, requiring no small exactness. Great care was taken to rid the apartment of every particle of leaven, in pretended or supposed obedience to the Divine Command in Exod. xii. 15, 19, (the spiritual intention of which St. Paul explains in a well known passage;)(b) moreover couches

(g) St. John xii. 2.

(t) Zech. xi. 12. See St. Matt. xxvii. 9, 10.

(x) Gen. xxxvii. 26 to 28. (y) Levit. xxvii. 5.

(a) See below, ver. 25.

(r) St. Mark xiv. 3 to 9.

(s) St. Luke xxii. 3.

(u) Exod. xxi. 32.

(b) 1 Cor. v. 7.

(z) St. Luke xxii. 6.

for the guests had to be prepared, the sundry articles required for the repast to be procured and cooked, and the chamber itself to be got in readiness. On the present occasion it is discovered from St. Mark's Gospel that "a large upper room furnished and prepared,(e) was divinely provided; and the two Disciples, for it was St. Peter and St. John(d) who were charged with this blessed office, had merely to get the Paschal Supper in readiness there.

18, 19 And He said, Go into the city to such a man, and say unto him, The Master saith, My time is at hand: I will keep the Passover at thy house with My Disciples. And the Disciples did as JESUS had appointed them; and they made ready the Passover.

"The name of this blessed individual who had the honour to receive CHRIST into his house, on this the greatest of all occasions, (like that other favoured one whose colt the King of Heaven deigned to ride,) is not mentioned on Earth; but we may well suppose that it is known and honoured in Heaven. CHRIST knows those that are His, and where they are to be found, and how."(e) By reference to the two later Gospels, it will be seen that the Disciples were furnished with an exact account of what would befall them on entering the city.(f)

20 Now when the even was come, He sat down with the Twelve.

And to know what immediately followed, you must read St. Luke xxii. 15 to 18, and then St. John xiii. 2 to 20. Those words of Love and that act of Humiliation ended, the Paschal Supper went on in the manner which the blessed Evangelist St. Matthew proceeds to describe.

21 And as they did eat, He said, Verily I say unto you, that one of you shall betray Me.

He had often before predicted to His Apostles that he should be betrayed.(g) Now, for the first time, he declares that *one of themselves* shall prove the Traitor. "Then the Disciples looked one on another, doubting of whom he spake."(h)

22 And they were exceeding sorrowful, and began every one of them to say unto Him, Lord, is it I?

How surprising is all this! It appears then that the Eleven, though they had accompanied with Judas for years, like brethren, knew nothing of his hidden blackness, to the very last. Did he then add consummate hypocrisy to all his other vices? Or are we not perhaps rather to behold in the scene before us an evidence of the simplicity and goodness of the Apostles; so full of that charity which "thinketh no evil,"(i)—so unwilling to judge their neighbour,(k)—that they can more readily suspect and judge themselves? Nay, when our LORD whispers to Judas, and the Traitor rises to leave the table, his hand the while upon "the bag;" so far from suspecting the devilish errand on which he is bent, they think that surely he has gone to buy something which they would have need of against the feast; or that he is gone to give something to the poor!(l) . . . In the meantime, the Eleven Apostles are questioning to which of themselves their Divine Master may have alluded.

23, 24 And He answered and said, He that dippeth *his* hand with Me in the dish, the same shall betray Me. The Son of Man goeth as it is written of Him: but woe unto that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed; it had been good for that man if he had not been born.

"Fearful indeed, and tremendous words! enough to have arrested the Traitor,

(e) St. Mark xiv. 15. (d) St. Mark xiv. 13; St. Luke xxii. 8.

(e) Williams. The Reader may refer to the note on St. Mark xi. 3.

(f) See St. Mark xiv. 13 to 15; and St. Luke xxii. 10 to 12.

(g) See St. Matth. xvii. 22; xx. 18; xxvi. 2. See above, on ver. 2, the last words of the note.

(h) St. John xiii. 22.

(i) 1 Cor. xiii. 5.

(k) St. Matth. vii. 1, where see the note.

(l) See St. John xiii. 29.

and to have shaken him to the depth of his inmost soul.”(m) But few things strike us more forcibly in the course of this wondrous narrative than the hardening effect of sin persevered in. We probably miss the intended warning if we ascribe this terrible result specially to the sin of covetousness; though *that* appears indeed to have been the sin of Judas. *Every* form of sin has a deadening effect upon the heart. Judas repents not; though he is warned that the pit of Hell even now gapes for him. Nay, we read:

25 Then Judas, which betrayed Him, answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.

What can have moved the miserable man to ask the question? Was it perhaps the dread of detection, if he alone remained silent?

“And now, as it is ever the custom of God, when He takes anything from His elect, to restore it unto them in another form, and in infinite abundance; and as of that Paschal Supper, and the Cup of the Old Covenant, He was to drink no more; He proceeds to establish the New Covenant, which was no less than His own Body and Blood.”(n) See more in the note on St. Mark xiv. 21.

26 And as they were eating, JESUS took bread, and blessed *it*, and brake *it*, and gave *it* to the Disciples,

He “took Bread,”—as all the Evangelists solemnly record.(o) He “brake it,” to set forth the breaking of His own Human Body; whence, according to St. Paul’s account of this great transaction, besides “This is My Body which is *given* for you,”(p) He said “This is My Body which is *broken* for you.”(q) By breaking the Bread Himself, he showed that it was by his own free will that he laid down his life.(r)

and said, Take, eat; this is My Body.

Mysterious words! the interpretation of which hath moved no small controversy in the Church of CHRIST. Let us rest content with that view of their meaning which the judgment of all antiquity hath approved, and which the purest branches of the Church Catholic have faithfully retained. Our own Hooker has declared this view of the words “This is My Body,” in the following terms:—“This hallowed food, through concurrence of Divine Power, is in verity and truth unto faithful receivers, instrumentally a cause of that mystical participation, whereby as I make myself wholly theirs, so I give them in hand an actual possession of all such saving grace as My sanctified Body can yield, and as their souls do presently need,—this is to them and in them, My Body.” . . . “The Bread which we break,” (asks the great Apostle,) “is it not the Communication of the Body of CHRIST?”(s)

27 And He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave *it* to them, saying, Drink ye all of it;

“And” (St. Mark records,) “they all drank of it.”(t) “Strange, that any individual or any Church(u) should cut itself off from a privilege so exceeding great, casting aside thereby the arm of the Great Comforter! For as he had said, ‘Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you;’(x) so also to his Church He hath said, ‘Drink ye all of it,’—and they all drank of it.”(y)

28 for this is My Blood of the New Testament,

Rather “of the New *Covenant* :” and it is called “the *New Covenant*,” (as the Prophet Jeremiah had named it long before),(z) in allusion to that elder one concerning which Moses, after he had “sprinkled both the book and all the people,”

(m) Williams.

(o) See the end of the note on St. Luke ix. 16.

(p) 1 Cor. xi. 24.

(r) St. John x. 18.

(t) St. Mark xiv. 23.

(u) St. John vi. 53.

(x) Jer. xxxi. 31 to 34: along with which should be read the Apostle’s reasoning in Hebr. viii. 8 to 13: x. 16 to 22.

(n) Williams.

(p) St. Luke xxii. 19.

(s) 1 Cor. x. 16.

(u) As the Romish.

(y) Williams.

(z) Jer. xxxi. 31 to 34: along with which should be read the Apostle’s reasoning in Hebr.

said, "This is the blood of the Testament" (or 'Covenant,') "which God hath enjoined unto you." (a) The *Old Covenant* had been made with "the blood of goats and calves;" but the *New Covenant* was to be ratified by "the blood of CHRIST." (b) And take notice that of the blood, anciently, none might drink on pain of death: but "Drink ye all of *this*," it is said.

which is shed for many for the remission of sins.

For "without shedding of blood, is no Remission." (c) But "it is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sins." (d) By this saying of our Blessed LORD it is therefore implied that what the Law was powerless to effect, would be achieved by His own most precious blood-shedding.

"The Cup of Blessing which we bless, is it not the Communication of the Blood of CHRIST?" (e) The Body and Blood of CHRIST are thus "verily and indeed taken and received by the faithful in the LORD's Supper." . . . "Let it therefore be sufficient for me, presenting myself at the LORD's Table, to know *what* I there receive from him, without searching or inquiring of the manner *how* CHRIST performeth his promise: let disputes and questions, enemies to piety, abatements of true devotion, and hitherto in this cause but over-patiently heard,—let them take their rest; let curious and sharp-witted men beat their heads about what questions themselves will; the very letter of the words of CHRIST giveth plain security that these mysteries do as nails fasten us to his very Cross, that by them we draw out, as touching efficacy, force, and virtue, even the blood of his gored side; in the wounds of our REDEEMER we there dip our tongues; we are dyed red both within and without; our hunger is satisfied and our thirst for ever quenched; they are things wonderful which he feelleth, great which he seeth, and unheard of which he uttereth, whose soul is possessed of this Paschal LAMB, and made joyful in the strength of this new wine: this bread hath in it more than the substance which our eyes behold; this cup hallowed with solemn benediction availeth to the endless life and welfare both of soul and body, in that it serveth as well for a medicine to heal our infirmities and purge our sins, as for a Sacrifice of Thanksgiving; with touching it sanctifieth, it enlighteneth with belief, it truly conformeth us unto the image of JESUS CHRIST. What these elements are in themselves it skilleth not; it is enough that to me which take them they are the Body and Blood of CHRIST: His promise in witness hereof sufficeth, his word he knoweth which way to accomplish. Why should any cogitation possess the mind of a faithful Communicant but this, O my God Thou art true, O my soul thou art happy." (f)

29 But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine, until that day when I drink it new with you in My FATHER'S Kingdom.

Our Blessed LORD refers most likely to that mysterious Festival,—twice (as it seems) alluded to, (g) nowhere (probably) described,—of which He partook with His Disciples after His Resurrection. "The Kingdom of God," (h) or as St. Matthew says, "of the FATHER," had then *come*,—not indeed in all its fullness, but in all its essential outlines. There was then a new Creation: "old things had passed away, behold, all things were become *new*." (i) And "the whole World, which by the transgression of the first Adam was made subject to vanity, partook in the deliverance wrought by the second Adam. In this new state therefore, in this state of liberty, whatever related to the Kingdom now given to the Son of Man, or to its blessed and sovereign LORD, might, agreeably to the Scriptural use of the word, be denominated '*New*.' So, at least, Wine might be called, if our gracious REDEEMER vouchsafed to partake of it, not for the refreshment of mortal nature, but for another and a higher purpose; to show the reality of His precious Body, and the certainty of His triumph over Death and the Grave."—The words are Churton's.

30 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

(a) Exod. xxiv. 8, quoted in Heb. ix. 19, 20.

(b) Heb. ix. 12, 14. Consider Zech. ix. 11.

(d) Heb. x. 4.

(g) Acts i. 4 and x. 41.

(e) 1 Cor. x. 16.

(h) St. Mark xiv. 25.

(c) Heb. ix. 22.

(f) Hooker.

(i) 2 Cor. v. 17.

Rather,—“and when they had *hymned*,” or “*sung*,” but whether one hymn, or many, is not expressly stated. Since, however, the Paschal Supper was commonly closed by the singing of certain known Psalms,—namely, from the cxv. to the cxviii. inclusive, (the cxiii. and cxiv. having been sung in the course of the repast,)—it is reasonable to suppose that the same Psalms were sung at the present Festivity, and that allusion is made to the established usage of the nation. . . . Take notice that after partaking of the LORD's Supper, we, in like manner, say or sing “Glory be to GOD on High,” &c.—The blessed Company, (eleven Apostles and their LORD,) were now moving in the direction of the Mount of Olives, being lighted on their way by the full Paschal moon.

31 Then saith JESUS unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep of the flock shall be scattered abroad.

In a chapter of the prophet Zechariah which abounds in mysterious allusions to the Passion of our Blessed SAVIOUR, it is written, “Awake, O sword, against my Shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow, saith the LORD of Hosts: *smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered.*”(k) To this the Good Shepherd here refers: adding,

32 But after I am risen again, I will go before you into Galilee.

Whereby He still speaks of Himself as a Shepherd, “*going before*” His sheep.(l) See St. John x. 4: and take notice that the Angel afterwards referred to these very words of CHRIST, when addressing the women at the Sepulchre.(m) Concerning this prophecy of one of our LORD's appearances, see the note on St. Matthew xxviii. 16.

33, 34 Peter answered and said unto Him, Though all *men* shall be offended because of Thee, *yet* will I never be offended. JESUS said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, that this night, before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice.

St. Peter had said that he would never be “*offended*” because of CHRIST: his LORD foretells that he will, on the contrary, deny even that he *knew* Him; and this, not once, but three times.—“*Never* will I be offended,” St. Peter had said. But our SAVIOUR declares that the fall of his servant would take place on that very night, before the second cock-crow.(n)—His words imply a presumptuous confidence in himself beyond all the rest. His LORD tells him that while *all* will be *scattered*, he will be the one even to *deny*.

35 Peter said unto Him, Though I should die with Thee, yet will I not deny Thee. Likewise also said all the Disciples.

Rather “Though it were required that I should die with Thee.” . . . The Blessed Company were now well advanced on their way,—for the 15th, 16th, and 17th chapters of St. John's Gospel belong to this interval. They had left the city-gate, and had crossed or were crossing the brook Cedron,—the same which David, our LORD's great type and ancestor after the flesh, had crossed in sorrow one thousand years before!(o)

36 Then cometh JESUS with them unto a place called Gethsemane,

“Where was a Garden, into the which He entered, and His Disciples. And Judas also, which betrayed him, knew the place: for JESUS oftentimes resorted thither with His Disciples.”(p) CHRIST repaired therefore to the accustomed spot.

37 and saith unto the Disciples, Sit ye here, while I go and pray yonder. And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and began to be sorrowful and very heavy.

(k) Zech. xiii. 7. See also verses 1 and 6.

(m) See St. Matth. xxviii. 7.

(o) 2 Sam. xv. 23.

(l) Consider St. Mark x. 32.

(n) Compare St. Mark xiv. 30.

(p) St. John xviii. 1, 2.

With St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, ("the choice ones of the chosen," as one of the Fathers speaks,) (*q*) the SAVIOUR withdrew to a remoter part of the Garden. These, who had once been the select witnesses of his Almighty Power, (*r*) and once, of his greatest Glory, (*s*) are now chosen to be the witnesses of his lowest Humiliation. Concerning "the anguish of his soul," here noticed, more will be found in the notes on St. Mark xiv. 34, and St. Luke xxii. 44.

38 Then saith He unto them, My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even unto death: tarry ye here, and watch with Me.

In the pains of the Body, (says Bishop Andrewes,) some sorrow like unto His might peradventure be found: "in the sorrow of the Soul, I am sure none. And, indeed, the pain of the body is but the body of pain: the very soul of sorrow and pain is the soul's pain and sorrow."

Our REDEEMER here addresses the three Disciples in words which must have recalled to their memories two remarkable places in the Book of Psalms. (*t*) Lest they should not fully apprehend the excess of his sorrow, he adds "even unto Death:" as if (says Bp. Pearson) the pangs of Death already encompassed Him, and as the Psalmist speaks, the pains of Hell had got hold upon Him. But how mysterious was His request that they would "*watch* with him!" Very man, he leans upon the men he loved; and looks to them in his hour of agony, for support and kindness.

39 And He went a little farther, and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, O My FATHER, if it be possible, let this cup pass from Me: nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou *wilt*.

This was done, as St. Paul records, "with a strong cry, and tears." (*u*) "And there appeared an Angel unto Him from Heaven, strengthening him. And being in an agony He prayed more earnestly: and his sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground." (*x*) This awful and most mysterious portion of his sufferings ended, the Holy One "rose up from prayer,"—

40, 41 And He cometh unto the Disciples, and findeth them asleep, and saith unto Peter, What, could ye not watch with Me one hour? watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit indeed *is* willing, but the flesh *is* weak.

42 He went away again the second time, and prayed, saying, O My FATHER, if this cup may not pass away from Me, except I drink it, Thy will be done.

A moment since we heard Him exhorting His Apostles to pray,—“Lead us not into Temptation;” as St. Polycarp remarks in his Epistle to the Philippians.—Another petition of the LORD'S Prayer is already found on His own Divine lips. It is not of course implied that His own "*will*" was at variance with that of His FATHER: but the Son of Man had a *human will*; and the practice of high Virtue in Him was by no means unattended with difficulty, even by reason of the opposition of the strongest, and at the same time the most innocent instincts of Humanity. (*y*)

43 And He came and found them asleep again: for their eyes were heavy.

Thrice He came to them; seeking consolation for himself, safety for *them*. But they slept; and St. Luke says that it was "for sorrow." (*z*) The same three Disciples slept also on the Mount of Transfiguration; and how is it possible to read such things, and not to connect them with our LORD'S prophetic intimations of what will be hereafter? (*a*)

44, 45 And He left them, and went away again, and prayed the

(*q*) Clement of Alexandria. (*r*) St. Mark v. 26 to 43. (*s*) St. Matth. xvii. 1 to 9.
 (*t*) The places referred to are Ps. xlii. 5, and cxvi. 3. (*u*) Heb. v. 7.
 (*x*) St. Luke xvii. 43, 44: where see the notes. (*y*) The hint is from Dr. W. H. Mill.
 (*z*) St. Luke xxii. 45. (*a*) See St. Matth. xxv. 5, 6, &c.

third time, saying the same words. Then cometh He to His Disciples, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is betrayed into the hands of sinners.

The meaning seems to be that "Henceforth," or "Hereafter," the Apostles might sleep and take rest, if they would: but that the hour for which He had so long been preparing them had now arrived. Wherefore our Lord adds,

46, 47 Rise, let us be going: behold, he is at hand that doth betray Me. And while He yet spake, lo, Judas, one of the Twelve, came, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief Priests and Elders of the people.

All the three Evangelists, both when they describe the intended and also the actual betrayal of our SAVIOUR by Judas, mention him as "*one of the Twelve*:" (b) an expressive way of denoting the exceeding greatness of his crime,—on which they yet make no comment whatsoever. Take notice that along with the multitude, came the "chief priests, and captains of the Temple, and elders" in person. (c)

48 Now he that betrayed Him gave them a sign, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He: hold Him fast.

"And led Him away safely,"—it is added in St. Mark's Gospel; where see the note. (d) Was this not he of whom it had been said,—"The words of his mouth were smoother than butter, having war in his heart?" (e) It is indeed greatly to be observed, (says one,) how much there is in the Psalms respecting Judas, throughout.

49 And forthwith he came to JESUS and said, Hail, Master; and kissed Him.

It seems to be implied that he gave his Divine Master a kiss of earnest affection. (f) "The signal agreed upon" (remarks the excellent Writer last quoted) "is much to be noticed on the present occasion, as indicating the very affectionate and friendly footing on which our Lord was wont to receive this wicked man; and is of the same character as that of His eating at Supper out of the same dish with him, and washing his feet on this very night. Such tokens of love and gentleness, habitually afforded to so evil a man, can only be equalled by that forbearance and goodness which the same Divine Master ever shows in his natural Providence; whereby He makes His Sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and continues to benefit the unthankful." (g)

50 And JESUS said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come? Then came they, and laid hands on JESUS, and took Him.

"Friend?" It was thus that the Householder remonstrated with the servant who murmured at his liberality; and thus that the King bespoke the guest that had not on a wedding garment. (h) No where else in the Gospel do we meet with this mode of address.—The next words are not words of inquiry, but of remonstrance. Well did our Divine Lord know "wherefore Judas had come!" (i)

51 And, behold, one of them which were with JESUS stretched out *his* hand, and drew his sword, and struck a servant of the high Priest's, and smote off his ear.

St. Peter had doubtless aimed at the man's head, and narrowly failed of effecting his purpose. "Jesus answered and said, Suffer ye thus far. And He touched his ear, and healed him." (k) St. Luke (the Physician) alone it is, who records this

(b) St. Matthew xxvi. 14: St. Mark xiv. 10 and 43: St. Luke xxii. 3 and 47. See also St. John vi. 71. (c) St. Luke xxii. 52. (d) On St. Mark xiv. 44.

(e) Psalm lv. 21.

(g) Williams.

(i) Compare St. Luke xxii. 48.

(f) The word recurs in St. Luke vii. 45: xv. 20. Acts xx. 37.

(h) St. Matth. xx. 13: xxii. 12.

(k) St. Luke xxii. 51.

miraculous act of healing: while St. John adds, "the servant's name was Malchus."^(l)

52, 53 Then said JESUS unto him, Put up again thy sword into his place: for all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword. Thinkst thou that I cannot now pray to My FATHER, and He shall presently give Me more than twelve legions of Angels?

"Twelve," because that was the number of His weak unarmed Apostles. How does this allusion to the powers of the unseen World kindle the fancy: at once reminding us of the surpassing honour to which *one* of the Angelic order had already been appointed:^(m) and suggesting the ardour with which the rest of the amazed and adoring Body must have longed to rush forth to avenge the cause of their Creator and their God!

By our SAVIOUR's allusion to the chief division of the Roman army, it seems to be hinted that the bright ranks of the Heavenly Host have discipline and order, courage and strength, subordination of offices, union under a common Leader, and whatever else appertains to a large and well-disciplined Army. See the note on St. Luke viii. 30; and Consider Daniel vii. 20, and 2 Kings vi. 17.

54, 55 But how then shall the Scriptures be fulfilled, that thus it must be? In that same hour said JESUS to the multitudes, Are ye come out as against a thief with swords and staves for to take Me? I sat daily with you teaching in the Temple, and ye laid no hold on Me.

Day by day, throughout the previous week, as we have seen, our LORD had taught openly in the Temple. Why then had they come upon Him thus by Night? Again, His only attendants were a few unarmed followers. Why then had they come out with swords and staves, as if against some desperate robber?—The Evangelist remarks.

56, 57, 58 But all this was done, that the Scriptures of the Prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the Disciples forsook Him, and fled. And they that had laid hold on JESUS led Him away to Caiaphas the High Priest, where the Scribes and the Elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him afar off unto the High Priest's palace, and went in, and sat with the servants, to see the end.

All this is given far more particularly in St. John's Gospel,—to which the Reader is referred.⁽ⁿ⁾

59, 60 Now the chief Priests, and Elders, and all the council, sought false witness against JESUS, to put him to death; but found none: yea, though many false witnesses came, yet found they none.

That is, "none" by whose evidence they might persuade Pilate "to put Him to death."

61 At last came two false witnesses, and said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the Temple of God, and to build it in three days.

How striking it is, at the close of our Blessed LORD's Ministry, to be thus reminded of a saying which came before us at the commencement of it, and which we had begun, as it were, to lose sight of! The occasion when the words were spoken, to which these wicked men allude, will be seen in the second chapter of St. John's Gospel;—where, in answer to the demand for "a sign," our LORD foretells his Death and Resurrection, saying, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up."^(o)

Not far removed from the Truth, it will be seen, was the statement of the witnesses, (they were of necessity *two*;) ^(p) whom nevertheless St. Matthew and St. Mark

(l) St. John xviii. 10.

(m) St. Luke xxii. 43.

(n) See St. John xviii. 15 to 18.

(o) St. John ii. 19.

(p) See Deut. xvii. 6: xix. 15.

concur in calling "*false witnesses.*" Wherein then consisted their falsity? It consisted in their ascribing to our SAVIOUR *the intention(q) of destroying* and then rebuilding the Temple,—"*this Temple that is made with hands,*" as St. Mark expresses it. What he had said, was, "*destroy ye, and I will raise up:*" by charging Him with the vaunt of power over the material shrine, and with the intention of making a display of that power, they had entirely altered the character of his words.—But even so, their witness did not agree, as St. Mark declares;(r) whereupon Caiaphas lost patience:

62, 63 And the High Priest arose, and said unto Him, Answerest Thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against Thee? But JESUS held his peace. And the High Priest answered and said unto Him, I adjure Thee by the living GOD, that Thou tell us whether Thou be the CHRIST, the SON of GOD.

The witness who kept silence after such an adjuration, the Law pronounced guilty.(s) Accordingly our SAVIOUR, who until now "as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so opened not He his mouth,"(t)—hereupon makes answer; showing thereby His reverence for the Law, and for the sacred office of the wicked man who addressed Him. See the note on St. Matthew xxvii. 12.

64 JESUS saith unto Him, Thou hast said: nevertheless I say unto you, Hereafter shall ye see the Son of Man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven.

Rather, "Moreover," or "What is more, I say unto you," &c. . . . "CHRIST is said to sit down at the *Right Hand* of the FATHER, in regard of that absolute power and dominion which He hath obtained in Heaven."(u)

Concerning this wondrous prophecy, the Reader is referred to what has been already offered in the notes on St. Matthew xxiv. 30.—The conduct of the High Priest on hearing these words, (which the Evangelist proceeds to describe,) shows clearly enough that he entirely understood our SAVIOUR's allusion to a famous passage in the Book of Daniel;(x) as well as his implied claim to be that Son of Man described by the Prophet, and whom the Jews interpreted as the MESSIAH.

65, 66 Then the High Priest rent his clothes,

This was done to aggravate our LORD's offence, and to add weight to his own words of condemnation.(y) Hypocritically indeed, was it done; "but it is awful to think that God fulfills in earnest what men do against Him in mockery. Thus the High Priest rent his clothes for a light purpose, but God rent them for him in very deed and truth: they arrayed CHRIST in royal robes, and a crown, and a sceptre, and proclaimed Him King of the Jews in derision; but God made Him all these in a Divine reality, and in a manner infinitely substantial. As Caiaphas prophesied, though he knew it not; and the false witnesses, though they knew it not, in lying spake truth; so now the High Priest in rending his garments, acted a real and deep tragedy for himself, for he thus declared that the order of Levi, the Jewish Priesthood, was rent, and already no more."(z)

saying, He hath spoken blasphemy; what further need have we of witnesses? behold, now ye have heard His blasphemy. What think ye? They answered and said, He is guilty of death.

"O amazing and stupendous extent of man's guilt and blind folly," (remarks the same writer,) "that he should come to this! But from greatest evil comes, by God's mercy, greatest good to His distressed creatures: they condemned Him to be guilty of death, but the condemnation of Him who was guiltless hath released us, who were worthy of death, from condemnation."

(q) See St. Mark xiv. 58.

(r) St. Mark xiv. 59.

(s) Levit. v. 1.

(t) Is. liii. 7; quoted in Acts viii. 32.

(u) Bishop Pearson. See Ps. cx. 1, and Acts vii. 55, 56.

(x) Dan. vii. 13.

(y) Chrysostom.

(z) Williams. Consider 1 Sam. xv. 27, 28, and 1 Kings xi. 30, 31.

67 Then did they spit in His face, and buffeted Him; and others smote Him with the palms of their hands,

So literally were the words of the Prophet fulfilled,—“I gave My back to the smiters, and My cheeks to them that plucked off the hair: I hid not My face from shame and *spitting*.”(a) To this monstrous indignity, (the spitting,) which was afterwards repeated,(b) it will be observed that both St. Matthew and St. Mark assign the foremost rank:(c) as indeed it is found to occupy a distinct place in our SAVIOUR’S own predictions of His approaching humiliation.(d) To request the Reader’s reference to Isaiah liii. 3 to 6, in illustration of such a text as the present, seems obvious.—These miscreants therefore smote Him,—

68 saying, Prophecy unto us, Thou CHRIST, Who is he that smote Thee?

The meaning of this act of wickedness is made plainer, by St. Mark’s statement that “they covered his face;”(e) but it is St. Luke who explains the matter fully, saying, “And when they had blindfolded Him, they struck him on the face,”(f) and gave him the blasphemous challenge recorded in the text. For “to prophesy” is not only to foretell future events; but to declare miraculously whatever cannot naturally be discovered. Thus Moses “prophesied” when he described the Creation, and the Fall of Man, no less than when He foretold the Captivity, and the Siege of Jerusalem.(g)

The three denials of St. Peter follow: which will be found more fully commented on in the notes on St. Mark’s Gospel.(h)

69, 70, 71, 72, 73 Now Peter sat without in the palace: and a damsel came unto him, saying, Thou also wast with JESUS of Galilee. But he denied before *them* all, saying, I know not what thou sayest. And when he was gone out into the porch, another *maid* saw him, and said unto them that were there, This *fellow* was also with JESUS of Nazareth. And again he denied with an oath, I do not know the man. And after a while came unto *him* they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art *one* of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee.

Or, as it is expressed in St. Mark’s Gospel, “for thou art a *Galilean*, and thy speech agreeth thereto.”(i) See the note on the place.

74 Then began he to curse and to swear, *saying*, I know not the man.

Take notice how he who at first (in ver. 70) had simply denied his LORD,—and (in ver. 72) had denied Him “with an oath,”—now at last begins “to curse and to swear, saying, I know not the man.” So rapid is the growth of Sin!

And immediately the cock crew.

“And the LORD turned, and looked upon Peter.”

75 And Peter remembered the word of JESUS, which said unto him, Before the cock crow, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And he went out, and wept bitterly.

“We have so often deeply wounded ourselves with medicines,” (says Hooker,) “that God hath been fain to make wounds medicinal; to cure by vice where virtue hath stricken: to suffer the just man to fall, that, being raised, he may be taught what power it was which upheld him standing. I am not afraid to affirm it boldly, with Augustine, that men, pulled up through a proud opinion of their own sanctity and holiness, receive a benefit at the hands of God, and are assisted with His

(a) Isaiah i. 6.

(b) St. Matth. xxvii. 30.

(c) See St. Mark xiv. 66.

(d) See St. Mark x. 34, and St. Luke xviii. 32.

(e) St. Mark xiv. 65.

(f) St. Luke xxii. 64.

(g) Deut. xxviii. 32 to 38 and 49 to 68.

(h) St. Mark xiv. 66 to 72.

(i) St. Mark xiv. 70.

Grace when with His Grace they are not assisted, but permitted, and that grievously, to transgress; whereby, as through over-great liking of themselves they fell, so the dislike of that which did work their fall may establish them afterwards the surer. Ask the very soul of Peter, and it shall undoubtedly make you itself this answer: My eager protestations, made in the glory of my ghostly strength, I am ashamed of; but those crystal tears, wherewith my sin and weakness was bewailed, have procured my endless joy; my strength has been my ruin, and my fall my stay."

CHAPTER XXVII.

1 CHRIST is delivered bound to Pilate. 3 Judas hangeth himself. 19 Pilate, admonished of his wife, 24 washeth his hands: 26 and looseth Barabbas. 29 CHRIST is crowned with thorns, 34 crucified, 40 reviled, 50 dieth, and is buried. 66 His sepulchre is sealed, and watched.

THE former Chapter ended with an account of St. Peter's three denials of his LORD,—and of his repentance. The Holy One was in the meantime undergoing the mock solemnity of a trial at the hands of the wicked men who had already determined upon His Death. He had been hurried from the Garden of Gethsemane to the House of Annas,—thence to the Palace of Caiaphas, the High Priest.(a) The whole night long had been one continued scene of insult and cruelty. It was now the morning of Friday.

1 When the morning was come, all the Chief Priests and Elders of the people took counsel against JESUS to put Him to death:

St. Luke alone describes the manner of their proceeding. See his Gospel,(b) for an account of what took place when the Holy One was brought before the high Court of Sanhedrin.

2 and when they had bound Him, they led Him away, and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor.

For they judged it expedient, on every account, to transfer to Pilate the execution of their own sentence. How the Roman Governor conducted himself towards the Holy Jesus, we shall be told in the 11th and following verses; in the meantime, it would appear as if Judas, terrified at the success of his own villainy, had been watching the progress of events with remorse and horror. The Council of "Chief Priests and Elders" had probably been held in the Temple. Accordingly, it is added:

3, 4 Then Judas, which had betrayed Him, when he saw that He was condemned, repented himself, and brought again the thirty pieces of silver to the Chief Priests and Elders, saying, I have sinned in that I have betrayed the innocent blood. And they said, What is that to us? see thou to that.

"In the Temple he makes his Confession, and offers restitution; but they in the Temple, who ought to receive the penitent, are the partners of his guilt. It is the

(a) St. John xviii. 13, 24.

(b) St. Luke xxii. 66 to 71.

voice of the children of Cain which answers 'What is that to us?' 'Am I my brother's keeper?' "(c) Very striking and fearful is the picture contained in the words which follow:

5 And he cast down the pieces of silver in the Temple, and departed, and went and hanged himself.

Thus does Judas himself bear evidence to the innocence of Him, whose death he had been so carefully contriving. He is visited also with pangs of fruitless Repentance; confesses his crime; and after a miserable fashion seeks to make restitution: for when he dashed down the money on the floor of the Temple,—(which act of his had not failed to arrest the keen glance of ancient Prophecy,) (d)—he doubtless intended that it should be applied to some sacred use. But his was not that godly sorrow spoken of by the Apostle,—(sorrow like Simon Peter's.)—which "worketh Repentance to Salvation: . . . but the sorrow of the World," which "*worketh Death*." (e) Judas "went and hanged himself;" (as Abithophel, David's "companion" and "own familiar friend," (f) had done before him:) (g) whereupon, as St. Luke informs us, he fell forward upon his face, burst asunder, "and all his bowels gushed out." (h)

It seems impossible to reach the close of the history of this most miserable of men, without reflecting with awful interest on what had probably been his course of life. And it may be regarded as certain that the character of Judas, (from the blackness of which we have learnt to recoil with horror,) occupies far too small a share of men's attention. A few remarks on this subject have been already offered elsewhere: (i) and this is not the proper place to pursue such a train of thought. We may not here discuss the nature of his peculiar sin,—its rapid growth,—and its hardening tendencies. It shall but be remarked that *he* will do well and wisely who shall set himself to gather up the many hints which, from first to last, fell from our Lord's lips on the subject of Covetousness; and to which the crime of Judas, at the close of the Gospel, supplies the obvious clue. Nor should the many warnings which the traitor continued to receive to the very last, escape our notice either; for they not only show the long suffering patience and love of Christ, but they furnish a comfortable assurance that no one should be deemed irreclaimable so long as he liveth.

Some will be found to inquire, Might not even Judas have repented? Doubtless the door of Mercy is never closed against the true penitent: and the blood of Christ is powerful to cleanse from all sin. "But then," (as it has been truly remarked,) "it appears equally clear from the whole analogy of Scripture, that true Repentance becomes more and more difficult, according to the degrees of grace rejected; and after a certain point, impossible. Thus it may be observed that St. Paul never intimates that Repentance is in any case unavailable; or that the door of pardon is closed against those who are 'renewed unto repentance.' But he does say, in the Epistle to the Hebrews, that it is impossible 'to renew unto repentance' those who have grievously fallen away, after great privileges. So that if the words 'though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,' (k) describe the unbounded extent of God's mercies in the Gospel covenant; yet notwithstanding this, the state of probation under the Gospel is described in a certain sense by those other words,—'Can the Ethiopian change his skin, or the leopard his spots? then may ye also do good, that are accustomed to do evil;' (l) and, 'he which is filthy, let him be filthy still.' (m) Numerous, in short are those expressions which describe the Mercy promised to Repentance, yet not less numerous are those which speak of Repentance becoming more and more difficult, and at length, impossible, after the rejection of Grace given." (n)

The end of this very wicked man, as recorded in verse 5, must evidently be referred to a somewhat later moment. He may have even delayed adding the guilt of suicide to his other tremendous crimes, until he had witnessed the final issue of his machinations against his Divine Master. But the incident which the Evangelist proceeds next to record, certainly belongs to a much later period:

(c) Williams, quoting Gen. iv. 9.

(f) Ps. lv. 14. See also Ps. xli. 9.

(i) See the notes on St. Matth. xxvi. 22 and 24.

(l) Jer. xiii. 23.

(d) See below, on ver. 10.

(g) 2 Sam. xvii. 23.

(m) Rev. xxii. 11.

(e) 2 Cor. vii. 10.

(h) Acts i. 18.

(k) Is. i. 18.

(n) Williams.

6 And the Chief Priests took the silver pieces, and said, It is not lawful for to put them into the Treasury, because it is the price of blood.

Take notice of their miserable inconsistency and superstition. How often are religious scruples thus found to dwell with men who have sold themselves to work all manner of iniquity! The Treasury had probably furnished the very pieces of silver which it is now deemed so sinful to replace there.

7, 8 And they took counsel, and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Wherefore that field was called, The field of blood, unto this day.

Thus does God overrule man's wickedness to his shame. Had these evil persons simply replaced the silver pieces, their crime would hardly have transpired: but by taking counsel, and buying a field with the money, their crime obtains many witnesses, besides a public monument.

The narrative is full of wonder and interest at every step. These wicked men thought that the Gentile strangers who happened to die at Jerusalem would be fitly provided for, if the price of a criminal's blood were bestowed in the purchase of a field wherein to bury them. But that criminal was CHRIST,—the SAVIOUR of the Gentiles: so that, (as in the case of Abraham of old,) a *burial-place*, (and *that*, bought with CHRIST's blood,) became the first possession of the Gentile Church; and it was theirs, at a time when God gave them none inheritance in the Land, no, not so much as to set their foot on; though He had promised that He would give them the whole Earth for a possession.^(o)

The transaction here recorded, is noticed in a very remarkable manner in the Acts. Judas is there represented as *purchasing* the field with the reward of iniquity: *the dead man* is spoken of as the agent; and the money he had returned, is declared with terrible significance to have remained *still* his.^(p)

A pious writer remarks,—“The price of CHRIST's blood was not to enrich the Temple of the Jews, but to supply a resting place for the Gentiles; to receive their bodies till the general Resurrection. St. Jerome, who had been at the place, mentions that they showed this field in his time: that it lay to the south of Mount Sion; and that they buried there the poorest and meanest of the people.”^(q) The spot is said to be clearly distinguishable to the present day.

9, 10 Then was fulfilled that which was spoken by Jeremy the prophet, saying, And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the price of Him that was valued, whom they of the children of Israel did value; and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD appointed me.

The words are found to stand thus in the Old Testament: “And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price; and if not, forbear. So they weighed for my price thirty pieces of silver. And the LORD said unto me, Cast it unto the potter: a goodly price that I was prized at of them. And I took the thirty pieces of silver, and cast them to the potter in the House of the LORD.”^(r) With such wonderful distinctness and precision was the sin of Judas described, five hundred years and upwards before it was actually committed! The difficulty occasioned by this statement of the Evangelist is well known: for it is *Zechariah*, not “Jeremy the prophet,” who delivers the prophecy under consideration. It is hard to see, however, where the supposed difficulty exists; if it be but believed that the same Spirit who inspired God's ancient Prophets guided His Evangelists likewise. St. Matthew does but inform us that this prophecy of Zechariah had been delivered by Jeremiah, about one hundred years before: and the information, however it may kindle gratitude, need excite no surprise. First, because many words must have been spoken by holy men of old as the Spirit gave them utterance, which were never committed to writing:^(s) next, because the later prophets often repeat the prophecies of those who went before them;^(t) and lastly, because Zechariah is

(o) Consider Gen. xxiii. Acts vii. 5.

(p) Acts i. 18, 19,—which (take notice,) are St. Luke's words; not St. Peter's.

(q) Williams. (r) Zech. xi. 12, 13.

(s) For instance St. Jude, verses 14, 15.

(t) Thus Is. xi. 9, is repeated in Hab. ii. 14: Mic. iii. 12, in Jer. xxvi. 18, &c. &c.

found to have spoken many things which recall the language of Jeremiah's prophecies.^(u) It is not, of course, denied that something of divine mystery attaches to the prophecy in question, which has never been explained: but there is no room for captious cavil concerning the words of the Evangelist.

Our attention is invited, however, to something of a widely different character. The Jewish Rulers having conducted our SAVIOUR before Pilate, (as recorded in verse 2.) bring against Him an accusation which they know will arouse the attention and excite the jealousy of the Roman Governor. "They began to accuse Him, saying, We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to give tribute to Caesar, saying that He Himself is CHRIST a King."^(x) Pilate accordingly asks a question, which all the four Evangelists agree in relating in the self-same words.

11 And JESUS stood before the governor: and the governor asked Him, saying, Art Thou the King of the Jews? and JESUS said unto him, Thou sayest.

This is that "good Confession" of which St. Paul reminded Timothy long after, as witnessed by CHRIST JESUS before Pontius Pilate.^(y) The echo of the appellation thus claimed for Himself by our SAVIOUR will be found never to die away throughout the judicial proceedings which follow, until Pilate deliberately affixes it, as a title, to the Cross.

12 And when He was accused of the Chief Priests and Elders, He answered nothing.

To the false accusations brought against our Blessed Lord, "He answered nothing:"^(z) but when Pilate, in verse 11, asked Him whether He were a King, He answered at once: just as in the former Chapter, He is found to have answered the question of the High Priest, whether He were the CHRIST, the Son of God?^(a)

13, 14 Then said Pilate unto Him, Hearest Thou not how many things they witness against Thee? And He answered him to never a word; insomuch that the governor marvelled greatly.

"It is evident," (says Origen,) "that Pilate was kindly disposed towards CHRIST, but yet he had no settled judgment, and was wavering." "He marvelled, that being a Teacher of the Law, powerful and eloquent, our Blessed Lord did not by His answers refute the charges brought against Him, but rather, calmly sustained them."^(b) "We may also suppose that there was something in His manner and words, so different from what is usual in a criminal, that the Judge felt something of awe and wonder before him."^(c) . . . To know what followed, the Reader must refer to chap. xxiii. of St. Luke's Gospel, and read from ver. 4 to ver. 16.

15, 16 Now at *that* feast the governor was wont to release unto the people a prisoner, whom they would. And they had then a notable prisoner, called Barabbas.

Concerning whom, St. Mark supplies in this place some particulars.^(d) The custom alluded to in ver. 15 was probably of recent date, and of Roman origin: but it had evidently become absolute.^(e) St. Mark adds that the populace with loud cries demanded of Pilate that "he would do as he had ever done unto them."

17, 18 Therefore when they were gathered together, Pilate said unto them, Whom will ye that I release unto you? Barabbas, or JESUS which is called CHRIST? For he knew that for envy they had delivered Him.

(u) Thus Zech. i. 4, recalls Jer. xviii. 11, and xxxv. 15. Zech. iii. 8, recalls Jer. xxiii. 5.

(x) St. Luke xxiii. 2.

(y) 1 Tim. vi. 13.

(z) See also St. Matth. xxvi. 63, and the note there.

(a) St. Matth. xxvi. 63, 64.

(b) Theophylact.

(c) Williams.

(d) St. Mark xv. 7.

(e) See St. Luke xxiii. 17. Also St. Mark xv. 6, 8.

Even so the Patriarchs, "moved with *envy*," delivered Joseph, (an eminent type of CHRIST,) into the hands of his enemies.(f)

19 When he was set down on the judgment seat, his Wife sent unto him, saying, Have thou nothing to do with that just Man: for I have suffered many things this day in a dream because of Him.

This remarkable incident is related only by St. Matthew. Judas, Herod Antipas, and Pilate, exhibit three remarkable types of Sin in the New Testament; and it is very striking to observe how many recorded *warnings* they obtained in the course of their downward career. Pilate receives a warning even from his own wife!

20, 21, 22, 23, 24 But the Chief Priests and Elders persuaded the multitude that they should ask Barabbas, and destroy JESUS. The governor answered and said unto them, Whether of the twain will ye that I release unto you? They said, Barabbas. Pilate saith unto them, What shall I do then with JESUS which is called CHRIST? They all say unto him, Let Him be crucified. And the governor said, Why, what evil hath he done? But they cried out the more, saying, Let Him be crucified.

When Pilate saw that he could prevail nothing, but *that* rather a tumult was made, he took water, and washed *his* hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person: see ye to *it*.

Pilate is the very type of the weak, wavering, temporizing statesman: quick to see the right course,—yet afraid to pursue it: striving, if possible, to reconcile supposed interest with certain duty; and in the end, making a miserable sacrifice of both. The ceremony which he is here described as performing, was well understood by the Jewish nation;(g) but it was probably common to other nations besides, as expressive of innocence.

Pilate testifies extraordinary anxiety to remove from himself the guilt of being accessory to our SAVIOUR's murder: yet has the Church in her Creed, from the very earliest time, linked the Crucifixion of CHRIST with *his* name only: "crucified—under Pontius Pilate."

25 Then answered all the people, and said, His blood *be* on us, and on our children.

Thus fulfilling the sentence of the Psalmist,—“Let the mischief of their own lips fall upon the head of them that compass Me about.”(h) . . . The notes on our LORD's prophecy of the Destruction of Jerusalem may convey some notion of the tremendous curse which these terrible words entailed upon its sinful inhabitants.(i) Josephus relates that so many were crucified at the time of the siege, that “room was wanted for the crosses, and crosses for the bodies.” The Jews became from that day forward a despised and scattered, a persecuted and degraded race,—a reproach among all the nations of the Earth.

26 Then released he Barabbas unto them: and when he had scourged JESUS, he delivered *Him* to be crucified.

This monstrous outrage meets with a special notice in the prophetic outline which our LORD Himself so often drew of His approaching Humiliation.(k) It is also solemnly described by the Evangelical Prophet: “He was wounded for our transgressions: He was bruised for our iniquities; the chastisement of our peace was upon Him; and with His stripes we are healed.”(l) A pious writer conceives that *this* is that bloody baptism which the SAVIOUR declared was in store for Himself.(m) The exceeding cruelty of the terrible infliction alluded to, is surely obvious to any

(f) See Acts vii. 9, referring to Gen. xxxvii. 28.

(h) Ps. cxl. 9.

(i) See St. Matth. xxiv.

(l) Is. liii. 5: quoted in 1 St. Peter ii. 24.

(g) Deut. xxi. 6 to 8.

(k) St. Matth. xx. 19.

(m) St. Luke xii. 50.

who will attend to the sacred narrative. The robing and unrobing which followed, must have materially aggravated the suffering; while the perfection of His sinless Humanity may well be thought to have sharpened every pain, and rendered the torture in fact intolerable.

27 Then the soldiers of the governor took JESUS into the common hall, and gathered unto Him the whole band of soldiers.

In the original, what is here called "the Common-Hall," "the Judgment-Hall," (u) and "the Governor's House," (o) is simply "the Prætorium."

28, 29 And they stripped Him, and put on Him a scarlet robe: and when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head.

"The perpetrators of this action designed by it nothing beyond the gratification of their wanton cruelty. But when we call to mind that the Second Adam was at this very time submitting Himself to the curse of God,—and couple with this the recorded fact that the thorn and the thistle were the fruits of that curse, as it took effect upon the ground,—we cannot resist the inference that the cruel device was overruled by God to the expression of a truth which He would have us discern and ponder. Being the immediate produce of the curse, the thorn was an appropriate decoration for the Man of the curse. But more than this. The endurance of the Thorn was the endurance of Sin's penalty as it visited not the transgressor but the place of his residence. Now, the endurance of a penalty by CHRIST in His vicarious character, involves and must ultimately issue in the cancelling of the penalty. And accordingly the circumstance of our Lord's having worn and suffered from a Crown of Thorns would seem to intimate that a revocation of the sentence which was passed upon the soil (p) is in God's design,—a revocation which may possibly involve the fulfillment in a literal sense of the prediction, that "*instead of the thorn, shall come up the fir tree; and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree.*" (q) These miscreants then, put such a crown upon His Head;

and a reed in His right hand: and they bowed the knee before Him, and mocked Him, saying, Hail, King of the Jews!

By such conduct, "in addition to what He had already undergone, inflicting excruciating agony as well as mockery, on His most sacred person: and thus was He, not in colour and appearance only, but in reality, 'with a vesture dipped in blood;' (r) coming 'with dyed garments from Bozrah; and stained in all His raiment.'" (s)

30 And they spit upon Him, and took the reed, and smote Him on the Head.

Concerning the disgusting outrage thus committed for the second time on the sacred person of our Lord, see the note on St. Matthew xxvi. 67.

"Thus was he crowned, and this was His Coronation Day. The Hall of Judgment was His Kingly Court, and these kneelers were His Courtiers. There was no part of His most adorable person but was marked with suffering and indignity. His head was bleeding with the Crown of thorns, and beaten with the reed: His Divine Countenance, from the brightness of which Angels hide their eyes in adoration, before which the Heavens are not clean, was defiled with spitting and bruised with blows: His back was mangled with the scourging of rude soldiers: His knees were already weak through fasting. And worse than the iron which held Him in chains, or which presently pierced His hands, were those words which, 'like the piercings of a sword,' enter the soul. For bodily inflictions we can in ordinary cases estimate, but not so the wounds of a righteous soul on beholding and hearing the deeds of the wicked." (t)

31 And after that they had mocked Him, they took the robe off from

(u) St. John xviii. 28, 33: xix. 9.

(o) See the margin.

(p) Gen. iii. 18.

(q) Goulburn, quoting Is. lv. 13. Consider, in connection with the remark in the text, Gen. ii. 19 and St. Luke xxii. 41.

(r) Rev. xix. 13.

(s) Williams, quoting Is. lxiii. 1 and 3.

(t) Williams.

Him, and put His own raiment on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

"And He," (the true Isaac,) "bearing His cross, went forth."^(u) This preliminary act of cruelty was the common punishment of malefactors: but so exhausted was our SAVIOUR with what he had already undergone, that on reaching the gate of the city, He could no longer endure the burden. It follows, therefore,

32 And as they came out they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name: him they compelled to bear His Cross.

And thus attended, He took His painful way to Calvary, followed by "a great company of people, and of women, which also bewailed and lamented Him."^(x) Nor was this part of His Passion without a mystical intention: for as "the bodies of those beasts whose blood is brought into the sanctuary by the High Priest for sin, and burned without the camp;" "JESUS also, that He might sanctify the people with His own blood, *suffered without the gate.*" Such is the Commentary of the SPIRIT on this incident; and it is added, with reference to the very scene here depicted, "Let us go forth therefore unto Him, without the camp, bearing His reproach."^(y)

But who was the "man of Cyrene" of whom we here read? "What good deed of faith had he done to CHRIST, or to CHRIST's little one's, that he, of all the sons of Adam, should have been deemed worthy to be admitted to this, the first and greatest of all earthly honours? Who he was, excepting by name, we know not; nor what he had done; for God withdraws from the sight of men, and hides in His own presence, those whom He most delights to honour."^(z) See the note on St. Mark xv. 21.

33 And when they were come unto a place called Golgotha, that is to say, a place of a skull,

A place "nigh to the City;"^(a) which may be thought to have derived its name from the hideous tokens of mortality with which it abounded, as an ordinary scene of suffering. There,

34 they gave Him vinegar to drink mingled with gall: and when He had tasted *thereof*, He would not drink.

35 And they crucified Him.

At once the most painful, and the most ignominious of Roman punishments: and it was done, in order that He might "redeem us from the curse of the Law, being made a curse for us;"^(b) for it is written, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."^(c) Not that suspension was one of the capital punishments prescribed by the Law of Moses; but such as they punished with death, were oftentimes after death exposed to the ignominy of the gibbet; and those who, being dead, were so hanged on a tree, were accursed by the Law. "Now though CHRIST was not to die by the sentence of the Jews, . . . yet the Providence of God did so dispose it, that He might suffer that death which did contain in it the ignominy to which the legal curse belonged, which is, *the hanging on a tree.*"^(d)

While we make such remarks concerning the history of CHRIST's Death, as well as concerning the many striking circumstances of His Passion, let us not fail to remember the spiritual agencies which were besides at work,—urging the enemies of the REDEEMER to words and deeds of unparalleled wickedness:^(e) sharpening every torture; and assailing Him by every avenue of Pain. For Satan, who, after the Temptation, departed from the Holy One "until a season,"^(f) beheld that his hour had now at last arrived,—as our SAVIOUR Himself declared.^(g) He it was who brought about the Crucifixion of CHRIST; vainly expecting that he should triumph over his formidable Enemy if he could succeed in bringing Him into subjection to the Law of Death. The union of the Divine and Human Natures in the one person

(u) St. John xix. 17.

(y) Heb. xiii. 11 to 13.

(b) Gal. iii. 13.

(c) See below, on ver. 38.

(x) St. Luke xxiii. 27, where see the note.

(z) Williams.

(c) Deut. xxi. 23.

(f) St. Luke iv. 13, where see the note.

(g) St. Luke xxii. 53.

(a) St. John xix. 20.

(d) Bp. Pearson.

of CHRIST was a mystery far beyond the wisdom of the Old Serpent; so that, (to quote a favourite expression of the Fathers,) the Cross proved the trap in which he was effectually taken. He perceived not till it was too late,—till, in fact, the Seed of the Woman was about to bruise his head: and the Second Adam, by submitting to Death, overcame Death,—that the Cross was to be the instrument of CHRIST'S Triumph, and the scene of His final victory: never else, (as St. Paul in a certain place remarks,) would he and his accursed agents “have crucified the LORD of Glory?”^(h) And these remarks, which it is no digression to offer in this place, furnish an explanation of that famous saying of Ignatius, first Bishop of Antioch: “The Prince of this World was baffled by the Virginity of Mary,—by her Child-bearing,—and likewise by the LORD'S Death: three crying Mysteries which were wrought in the secrecy and silence of God!” The early Fathers were familiar with this thought, of which we find many traces in their writings. See below, the note on ver. 40.

His enemies crucified Him therefore,

and parted His garments, casting lots: that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, They parted My garments among them, and upon My vesture did they cast lots.

Very surprising is the exactness of this fulfillment of ancient Prophecy. David is found to have written thus in Psalm xxii. 18: but the Psalmist cannot have foreseen the issue of his own words: he cannot have known that while the garments of the SAVIOUR would be hereafter divided into four parts by the four soldiers who were appointed to guard His Cross, His seamless coat, (as St. John records,) would be spared; and lots cast upon it, in order to decide to whom it should belong!⁽ⁱ⁾

Like every other very momentous transaction in the history of the adorable REDEEMER, the fate of the garments which covered His most sacred Person, is related by all the four Evangelists.^(k)

36, 37 And sitting down they watched Him there: and set up over His head His accusation written, THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS.

It was customary with the Romans to set a title over the heads of those who were condemned to death. But take notice that the Providence of God, (which overrules all words and actions of men,) caused the SAVIOUR'S accusation, which was meant in bitter ridicule, to convey nothing but the truth. See more in the note on St. Luke xxiii. 38: see also on St. Matthew xxvi. 65.

38 Then were there two thieves crucified with Him, one on the right hand, and another on the left.

Whereby was fulfilled that prophecy of Isaiah, “and He was numbered with the transgressors;” as St. Mark notes.^(l) Concerning the men here called “thieves,” see the note on St. Luke xxiii. 32.

It has been well remarked that all “the evil designed by the enemy, was turned into the glory of God by CHRIST. In order to ridicule and degrade the Holy One, he suggests to the Jews to place Him between two thieves: it redounded to the highest glory of the Kingdom of Mercy.^(m) He instigated them to crucify the REDEEMER: no other death would have so much reached to the fullness,—to the breadth, and length, and depth, and height,⁽ⁿ⁾—of our misery. The Devil urged Pilate to the scorn and ridicule of that title on the Cross: it is a name written in Heaven, and bears witness to CHRIST'S Eternal Kingdom. He urged the people and their rulers to mock Him: but all they said fulfilled the prophecy. He instigated them to add to His torments, but it only made His Atonement perfect. And it has passed into a Law for CHRIST'S subjects and followers, that the evil designed against them, is by Him made their chief good, if they adhere to Him.”^(o)

(h) 1 Cor. ii. 8.

(i) See St. John xix. 23, 24.

(k) St. Mark xv. 24; St. Luke xxiii. 34; St. John xix. 23, 24.

(l) St. Mark xv. 28, quoting Is. liii. 12.

(m) St. Luke xxiii. 43.

(n) Alluding to Ephes. iii. 18.

(o) Williams.

It had been said prophetically, "I became a reproach unto them; when they looked upon Me, they shaked their heads."(*p*) Accordingly it is added:

39, 40 And they that passed by reviled Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself. If Thou be the SON of GOD, come down from the cross.

They revive the accusation which they had already fruitlessly brought against Him.(*q*)—based upon the Divine saying, recorded in St. John ii. 19; and in challenging our LORD to perform a miracle in proof of His Mission, they show the popular expectation the MESSIAH, when He came, would work Miracles. Consider St. John vii. 31. The form which their language assumes, recalls the language addressed to CHRIST by the Tempter.(*r*) The best of the Fathers, indeed, have not scrupled to assign the speech to *him* on this occasion; instigating his agents to obtain, by whatever means, our LORD's descent from that Cross whereon He was already clearly a Conqueror.

41, 42 Likewise also the Chief Priests mocking *Him*, with the Scribes and Elders, said, He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He be the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him.

They choose their sign; but they have been already warned that they shall be favoured with none, save that of the prophet Jonas.(*s*) This insult is the echo of what we met with above, in verse 40: concerning which, see the note on St. Matthew xiv. 29. "He might indeed have come down," remarks Bp. Pearson, "and in saving himself *have never saved us*."—They proceed:

43 He trusted in GOD: let Him deliver Him now, if He will have Him: for He said, I am the SON of GOD.

Had not this also been the subject of express prophecy? "All they that see Me laugh Me to scorn: they shoot out the lip, they shake the head, saying, He trusted on the LORD that He would deliver Him; let Him deliver Him, if He delight in Him."(*t*) "Carnal man," remarks Bp. Wilson, "cannot comprehend that God loves those whom He permits to suffer: but Faith teaches us that the Cross is the gift of His love and the foundation of our hope, the mark of His children, and the title of an inheritance in Heaven."

44 The thieves also, which were crucified with Him, cast the same in His teeth.

They were both blasphemers, at first; but one of the two proved a Confessor in the end, and received a gracious assurance of his acceptance from the lips of CHRIST himself.(*u*) The Evangelist proceeds to notice the supernatural darkness which from noon till about three o'clock covered the land; and which may well be supposed to have wrought a change in the thoughts of many concerning the Crucified.

45 Now from the sixth hour there was darkness over all the land unto the ninth hour.

This was no *eclipse* of the Sun; for it took place at the Passover season, when the Moon was at the full. The darkness was altogether supernatural; "an awful token of the withdrawing of the light of God's countenance from the land in which the SON of GOD was hanging upon the Cross."(*x*)

46 And about the ninth hour JESUS cried with a loud voice, saying,

(*p*) Ps. cix. 25.

(*q*) St. Matth. xii. 39.

(*r*) Psalm xxii. 7, 8: the last words, from the margin.

(*s*) See St. Luke xxiii. 39 to 43, and the notes there.

(*t*) Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(*u*) See St. Matth. xxvi. 61.

(*v*) St. Matth. iv. 3, 6.

Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani? that is to say, My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

Thus did our Blessed SAVIOUR accept the application of the 22d Psalm, already made by the Chief Priests and Scribes: (y) quoting the first prophetic words of that Psalm, and acknowledging them to be fulfilled in His own Person. "The Son of David," says Bp. Pearson, "shows in whose person the father spake it."

He was bereft of Divine Consolation, too, on this day, (says holy Bishop Andrewes,) "and *that* was His most sorrowful complaint of all: not that His friends upon Earth, but that His FATHER from Heaven had forsaken him: that neither Heaven nor Earth yielded Him any regard; but that between the passioned powers of His soul and whatsoever might in any way refresh Him, there was" a barrier set, "and *He* left in the state of a weather-beaten tree, all desolate and forlorn;—evident, too evident, by that His most dreadful cry, which at once moved all the Powers in Heaven and Earth, 'My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?'—Weigh well that cry; consider it well, and tell me if ever there were cry like that of His . . . The Powers of Darkness let loose to afflict Him,—the influence of Comfort restrained from relieving Him,—never was there sorrow like unto His sorrow! It cannot be expressed as it should, and as other things may. In silence we may admire it, but all our words will not reach it."

47 Some of them that stood there, when they heard *that*, said, This *Man* calleth for Elias.

The words resemble each other, and might easily have been mistaken, especially by those who spake not in the peculiar dialect of the Hebrew, which our Blessed SAVIOUR is thought to have used.

"After this, JESUS knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, saith, I thirst." (z)

48 And straightway one of them ran, and took a sponge, and filled *it* with vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave Him to drink.

Was it not written of old,—“They gave Me also gall for My meat; and in My thirst they gave Me vinegar to drink?” (a) For “the tender mercies of the wicked are cruel.” (b)

49 The rest said, Let be, let us see whether Elias will come to save Him.

For a very general belief prevailed among the ancients, both before the time of our LORD and since, that Elijah was to return in person: a subject which has been already adverted to in the note on St. Matthew xvii. 11 and 12. These wicked brethren of a greater than Joseph, see “the anguish of His soul,” (c) and add insult to Him who is already in the very depth of Distress: “which barbarous and brutish inhumanity of theirs,” says Bp. Andrewes, “must needs pierce deeper into His soul, than even did the iron into His side.”

50 JESUS, when He had cried again with a loud voice, yielded up the ghost.

He said “It is finished;” (d) and, “FATHER into Thy hands I commend My Spirit:” (e) which were the two last of the seven recorded sayings of CHRIST upon the Cross.

As there had been signs in Heaven going before this tremendous event, so were there now signs on the Earth, yea, and under the Earth, following it.

51 And, behold, the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom:

Whereby, it is evidently implied, that not only had our SAVIOUR entered into the Holy of Holies, “into Heaven itself, to appear in the presence of God for us;” but

(y) See above, ver. 42, 43.

(b) Prov. v. 10.

(z) St. John xix. 28.

(c) Gen. xlii. 21.

(e) St. Luke xxiii. 46.

(a) Ps. lxxix. 21.

(d) St. John xix. 30.

also that the veil was removed by which we were excluded, and that henceforth we might follow Him thither. For we have "boldness," says the Apostle, "to enter into the holiest by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the Veil, *that is to say His flesh.*"^(f)

"Nor does it merely signify our admission into Heaven after Death; but also our having access now into the Holy of Holies, through the Blood of CHRIST with which we are sprinkled; for it is in this sense that St. Paul applies it in this passage."^(g) It seems to be further implied, that in CHRIST, the distinction between Jew and Gentile was to be done away; that the mysteries of the Law should henceforth be uncovered; and that the Divine Protection which had so long defended the Holy Place from outrage and pollution, was henceforward to be withdrawn.

52 and the Earth did quake, and the rocks rent: and the graves were opened,

"All the Creatures in Heaven and Earth seemed to hear this His mournful complaint, and in their kind to show their regard of it: the Sun in Heaven shrinking in his light,—the Earth trembling under it,—the very stones cleaving in sunder, as if they had sense and sympathy: sinful Man only not moved with it! And yet it was not for the creatures, this was done to Him; to them it pertaineth not: but for us it was done, and to us it doth pertain. And shall we yet not regard it? Shall the creatures regard it, and not we? If we do not, it may appertain to us, but we do not pertain to it. None pertain to it but they that take benefit by it; and none take benefit by it, (no more than by the brazen Serpent,) but they that fix their eyes on it."^(h) The graves were opened,

and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose,

Marvels attend the SAVIOUR from the Cradle to the Grave. At the loud cry with which He breathed out His human Soul, the Saints of GOD stir in their shrouds: as if by anticipation of that dreadful hour "when they are in the graves shall hear the Voice of the SON of GOD, and they that hear shall live."⁽ⁱ⁾ "We may suppose," (says a pious writer,) "that His dying Voice did penetrate into the furthest regions of the dead; that, together with that Earthquake, all they that were in their graves were moved, and some great change was wrought in their condition: and perhaps by CHRIST Himself, the great atoning Victim, at that moment appearing among the dead and going down to Hell."^(k) But it is obvious that the Evangelist is anticipating what was of later occurrence when he says that "many bodies of the Saints which slept arose." Those words must in fact be taken with the words which follow:

53 and came out of the graves after His Resurrection, and went into the Holy City, and appeared unto many.

For it is not to be supposed that any of the Saints arose before the King of Saints was risen. "CHRIST the first-fruits; afterwards they that are CHRIST'S."^(l) But surely it was fitting that He who at this time "descended into Hell," and "preached to the Spirits in safe keeping,"^(m) should conduct with Him, when He rose from Death, a kind of first-fruits of those ancient Saints of His who had fallen asleep in His perfect Faith and Fear. Was not the event here recorded a blessed earnest of that "Resurrection of the Body," which was to be hereafter, and in which the whole Church professes to "believe?"

Take notice that guilty Jerusalem is still called "the Holy City." Even so we speak of "the Holy Catholic Church," though it be true that Iniquity abounds therein.

54 Now when the Centurion, and they that were with him, watching JESUS, saw the earthquake, and those things that were done, they feared greatly, saying, Truly this was the SON of GOD.

(f) Heb. x. 20.

(h) Bp. Andrewes, alluding to Numb. xxi. 8, 9.

(i) St. John v. 28.

(l) 1 Cor. xv. 23.

(g) Williams.

See also the note on St. Mark xv. 38.

(k) Williams.

(m) 1 St. Pet. iii. 19.

A very extraordinary confession, surely, on the lips of those who uttered it; and who cannot have known the full meaning of what they said. But they had heard our SAVIOUR claim this wondrous appellation, and they had seen Him punished for it. They had also witnessed enough to convince them that no title was too lofty for such an one as they had been appointed to guard.

55, 56 And many women were there beholding afar off, which followed JESUS from Galilee, ministering unto Him: among which was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the Mother of James and Joses, and the Mother of Zebedee's children.

That is, besides Mary of Magdala, there was Mary, (the sister of the Blessed Virgin,) and Salome, the Mother of St. James and St. John.

It was now drawing near the time of Sunset, at which time the Sabbath-day would begin. But the Jewish law farbad that the body of one hung on a tree should hang there all night.(u) Accordingly, it is added:

57, 58 When the even was come, there came a rich man of Arimathea, named Joseph, who also himself was JESUS' disciple: he went to Pilate and begged the Body of JESUS. Then Pilate commanded the Body to be delivered.

O unspeakable privilege! He asked for nothing less than the Body of CHRIST: and nothing less than the Body of CHRIST is given him.

59, 60 And when Joseph had taken the Body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out in the rock: and he rolled a great stone to the door of the Sepulchre, and departed.

Thus did our SAVIOUR make "His grave with the wicked, and with the rich in His death:"(o) the meaning of which prophecy seems to be, that "His grave *was appointed* with the wicked,"—that is, with the two thieves. Joseph of Arimathea did not perform this act of piety alone. Nicodemus, another member of the High Court of Sanhedrin, (the same who had at first come to JESUS by night,) waxing bolder and stronger in the Faith, had been his helper:(p) and thus, He who was transfigured, and crucified, with two,—whose resting place was guarded by two,—and at whose Ascension, two were sent with a message to the Twelve,(q)—the same is now conveyed to His grave in the garden by two, likewise. It was "a sepulchre that was hewn in stone, wherein never man before was laid:"(r) and the circumstance recalls a remark which was offered in the notes on St. Matthew ii. 2, and St. Luke xviii. 39.

61 And there was Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, sitting over against the Sepulchre.

That is, Mary the Mother of Joses,(s) mentioned above in ver. 56. These two seem to have lingered at the sepulchre, as if absorbed in grief. Well may the first named woman have been selected to be the earliest witness of the Resurrection!(t)

62, 63 Now the next day, that followed the day of the preparation, the Chief Priests and Pharisees came together unto Pilate, saying, Sir, we remember that that Deceiver said, while He was yet alive, After three days I will rise again.

"Even in death and after death to be called a "Deceiver," as if no other description could express Thee! Thy humiliations, and wounds, and shame, are not yet over or exhausted, but flow on still even beyond the grave, to the healing of our sick souls, and the strengthening of our weak faith; teaching us that not even in

(u) Deut. xxi. 22, 23.

(p) St. John xix. 39 to 42.

(q) St. Luke xxiii. 53.

(o) Is. liii. 9.

(q) See the note on St. Luke ix. 30.

(s) St. Mark xv. 47.

(t) St. Mark xvi. 9.

death are we to seek for a good name for ourselves, but that when reviled we shall have Thy shame to cover us.”(u)

But *when* had “the faithful and true Witness”(x) said this thing? *Never in their hearing*, certainly, on any recorded occasion. Had they then obtained the statement from Judas, or from some other of the Twelve? But they say “we remember.” Did they then so well understand the dark sayings of our LORD concerning “this Temple,”(y) and “the sign of the Prophet Jonas”(z) as to venture thus boldly to interpret it?—They proceed:

64 Command therefore that the sepulchre be made sure until the third day, lest His Disciples come by night, and steal Him away, and say unto the people, He is risen from the dead: so the last error shall be worse than the first.

That is, The popular delusion concerning CHRIST will thereby become more fatal and hopeless than it was before.(a) There is surely something of bitter irony in Pilate's reply:

65, 66 Pilate said unto them, Ye have a watch: go your way, make it as sure as ye can. So they went, and made the Sepulchre sure, sealing the stone, and setting a watch.

They did indeed “set a watch” or “guard;” but it is reasonable to suspect that the Evangelist does not here say so. Instead of “setting a watch,” it should perhaps rather be,—“*with the guard.*” That is, the band of Roman soldiers which at such seasons was placed at the disposal of the chief Priests, attended them with the Pharisees when they went to seal the stone of the sepulchre: so that He who in His lifetime was condemned both by Jews and Gentiles, has witnesses of either nation also in His Death. As once before, “a stone was brought, and laid upon the mouth of the den; and the King sealed it with his own signet, and with the signet of his lords, that the purpose might not be changed concerning Daniel,”(b) —so also is it done now. But lo, a greater than Daniel is here: even He of whom it is written, “Thou shalt tread upon the lion and adder; the young lion and the dragon shalt Thou trample under feet.”(c)

And now, in exchange for the loving hearts which we lately heard of at the sepulchre of our Blessed REDEEMER, Roman soldiers are keeping guard there: “for if ‘Love is strong as Death, Jealousy,’ also adds the holy canticle, ‘is cruel as the Grave.’”(d) Those afflicted ones had gone sorrowing to their homes: but they were destined to experience the blessed truth that though “weeping may endure for a night,” yet “joy cometh in the morning.”(e)

THE PRAYER.

GRANT, O LORD, that as we are baptized into the death of Thy Blessed SON our SAVIOUR JESUS CHRIST, so by continual mortifying our corrupt affections we may be buried with Him; and that through the grave, and gate of death, we may pass to our joyful resurrection; for His merits, who died, and was buried, and rose again for us, Thy SON JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

(u) Williams.

(y) St. John ii. 19.

(a) A proverbial saying, which recurs in St. Matth. xii. 45 and 2 St. Peter ii. 20.

(b) Dan. vi. 17.

(d) Williams, quoting Song of Sol. viii. 6.

(x) Rev. iii. 14.

(z) St. Matth. xii. 39, 40.

(c) Ps. xci. 13. Consider Gen. iii. 15.

(e) Ps. xxx. 5.

CHAPTER XXVIII.

1 CHRIST's Resurrection is declared by an Angel to the women. 9 He Himself appeareth unto them. 11 the High Priests give the soldiers money to say that He was stolen out of His sepulchre. 16 CHRIST appeareth to His Disciples, 19 and sendeth them to baptize and teach all nations.

THE former Chapter ended with an account of the interment of CHRIST, the sealing of the Sepulchre, and the "setting a watch." These are the only recorded events of the last Jewish Sabbath,—on which day CHRIST rested in the grave from the work of Redemption, as "in the beginning" He had rested on that day from the work of Creation. "The obligation of the Sabbath," says Bishop Pearson, "died and was buried with Him; but, in a manner, revived again at His Resurrection. And well might that day, which carried with it a remembrance of deliverance from Egyptian servitude,^(a) resign all the sanctity or solemnity due unto it, when that morning once appeared upon which a far greater Redemption was confirmed." A stronger reason, therefore, henceforth transferred the obligation of the Sabbath to another day: "and as there was a change in the year at the coming out of Egypt, by the command of God,^(b) so, at this time of a more eminent deliverance, a change was wrought in the weekly account."^(c)

1 In the end of the Sabbath, as it began to dawn towards the first day of the week, came Mary Magdalene and the other Mary to see the sepulchre.

"The other Mary" was "Mary the mother of James^(d) and Joses,"^(e) our Lord's cousins: that is, she was the wife of Clopas, and sister to the Blessed Virgin.^(f) Joanna,^(g) and Salome, (the mother of St. James and St. John,) belonged also to the same company of women who visited the sepulchre "very early in the morning, the first day of the week, . . . at the rising of the sun,"—as St. Mark says:^(h) or rather, as St. Mark *explains*; for the statements of the later Evangelist are often, as here, explanatory. Thus the same blessed Writer, will be found to explain that the object of these holy women in coming thus early to the grave was to anoint the dead Body of their Lord,—to bestow upon it *that* customary anointment previous to burial, which, by reason of their haste, Joseph and Nicodemus had not been able to provide; but which nevertheless the Son of Man had not lacked: for, as His own lips had declared, (but probably not in their hearing,) the sister of Lazarus had already thus anointed His Body.⁽ⁱ⁾

Take notice that the great event with which the present chapter commences took place on "*the first day of the week.*" CHRIST, "who is the true Light,"^(k) comes forth on the same day in which He had anciently said—"Let there be Light!" . . . The New Creation^(l) begins on the same day as the Old.

It was now, in fact, the beginning of "the third day," and therefore, "*after three days,*" according to the well-known sacred method of speech, which it is not necessary here to illustrate by examples. This period is prophetically shadowed out in many an ancient history; but in none so clearly as in that of Jonah,—to whose fate, as distinctly typical of His own descent into Hell and Resurrection

(a) Deut. v. 15.

(b) Exod. xii. 2.

(c) Bishop Pearson.

(d) St. Mark xvi. 1.

(e) St. Mark xv. 47, compared with verse 40.

(f) See the note on St. Mark iii. 31.

(g) St. Luke xxiv. 10.

(h) St. Mark. xvi. 2.

(i) See St. Matth. xxvi. 12; St. Mark xiv. 8; St. John xii. 7.

(k) St. John i. 9. &c.

(l) See the note on St. Matthew iii. 17: xxiv. 8; xxvi. 29. St. John ii. 1, &c.

from the dead, our LORD himself appealed on a famous occasion.^(m) The great type in respect of *the Day* on which our SAVIOUR rose, was the waved sheaf in the feast of the first-fruits.⁽ⁿ⁾ The Priest was required to wave that sheaf, (the first-fruits of the Harvest,) before the LORD, "on the morrow after the Sabbath:" and all the sheaves of the field became holy by the acceptance of *that*; "for if the first-fruits be holy, the lump is also holy."^(o) "By which, thus much was foretold and represented,—that as the sheaf was lifted up and waved, so the promised MESSIAS was upon this Day to be lifted up and raised from the dead: or rather to shake, and lift up, and present Himself to God, and so to be accepted for us all: that so, our dust might be sanctified, our corruption hallowed, our mortality consecrated to eternity."^(p)

But the Evangelist is describing the visit of the women to the Sepulchre on the morning when the great antitype of the wave-sheaf was revealed:

2, 3, 4 And, behold, there was a great earthquake: for the Angel of the LORD descended from Heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat upon it. His countenance was like lightning, and his raiment white as snow: and for fear of him the keepers did shake, and became as dead *men*.

This is, of course, the account of what took place shortly before the women arrived,—the description of what had terrified the soldiers who, as the concluding verses of the former chapter explain, were set to guard our LORD's sepulchre. And well may such a spectacle have inspired them with terror. The men were already possessed with a sense of misgiving as to the awful nature of Him who slept within; for they had probably been witnesses of His Crucifixion. But the descent from Heaven of such a glorious being as the Evangelist describes, must have surpassed all expectation. The bright aspect, and the robe of dazzling white, we meet with on other occasions,^(q) as belonging to visitants from the unseen World. With the feat of "power and might" performed by this angelic being,^(r) compare what is related, and in very similar language too, of Jacob,—in Genesis xxix. 10.

Take notice that the descent of the Angel is not to be regarded as the signal, or the instrument, of our LORD's awaking: much less is the rolling back the stone from the mouth of the sepulchre to be looked upon as an act intended to assist our LORD's coming forth, on his waking from death. He was already risen before the angel came. He had raised himself;^(s) with calm majesty, had divested himself of the linen clothes in which Joseph and Nicodemus had wound His lifeless body;^(t) and had come forth. But it was in order to make the Resurrection known alike to friends and foes, that an Angel was sent on this glorious errand. CHRIST *raised himself* from death, according to His own express prediction:^(u) for "the union of the two Natures (the Divine and Human) still remained; nor was the Soul or the Body of CHRIST separated from the Divinity; but still subsisted as they did before, by the subsistence of the Second Person of the Trinity."^(x)

The women then, on reaching the sepulchre, found the place unguarded; and the stone rolled away from the door. They therefore drew near with wonder, in order to discover what had become of the body of the LORD.

5 And the Angel answered and said unto the women, Fear not ye: for I know that ye seek JESUS, which was crucified.

"Fear not ye;" it is said with marked emphasis. Let the soldiers "shake, and become as dead men" through fear; but "fear not ye." It is worth observing how eager the Holy Angels ever show themselves to comfort the timid hearts of faithful mortals. See the places referred to below.^(y)

6 He is not here: for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the LORD lay.

(m) St. Matth. xxii. 40.

(n) Concerning which, see Leviticus xxiii. 10 to 12.

(o) Romans xi. 16.

(p) Bishop Pearson.

(q) Compare Dan. x. 6: and

see the note on St. Luke ix. 29.

(r) 2 St. Peter ii. 11.

(s) St. John ii. 19, 21.

(t) Compare St. John xx. 6, 7, and xix. 40.

(u) St. John ii. 19, 21.

(x) Bishop Pearson.

(y) Judges vi. 23.

Dan. x. 12, 19. St. Luke i. 13, 30: ii. 10. Acts xxvii. 24. Compare Rev. i. 17.

"As He said,"—on so many occasions: (z) but the chief occasion which the Angel referred to is found in St. Matthew xvii. 23; where see the note. This appears from St. Luke's Gospel, where it is added,—“Remember how He spake unto you when he was yet in Galilee, saying, The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again.” (a)

The Angel was not sitting on the stone when he spoke these words, as many persons imagine. He was within the sepulchre. There were in fact “two men in shining garments,” (b) who had stationed themselves, (like the Cherubim on the Mercy-seat,) “the one at the head, and the other at the feet, where the body of JESUS had lain.” (c) St. Matthew may be thought to record the address of the principal Speaker; the same, doubtless, of whom we heard in verses 2 to 4. St. Mark says that he was “a young man, sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment.” (d) He continues to address the astonished women in the words which follow:

7 And go quickly, and tell His Disciples that He is risen from the dead; and, behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him: lo, I have told you.

Concerning the appearance in Galilee, foretold by CHRIST, (e)—announced here by an Angel,—and presently promised by Himself, (f)—see below the note on verse 16.

8 And they departed quickly from the sepulchre with fear and great joy; and did run to bring His Disciples word.

“Since Death began from the female sex, to *her* first is given the seeing and announcing the glory of the Resurrection.” (g) “Woman, who came before like an evil Angel to Man, now returns to him even as an Angel of good.” (h)

St. Mark says that, “when JESUS was risen early, the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.” (i) This then was His first appearance after His Resurrection. His second recorded appearance follows. But the exact order in which the subsequent appearances of the risen SAVIOUR took place, (for ten, in all, are recorded;) and how the course of events on this, the most eventful Morning in the World's History, may most satisfactorily be adjusted—we shall not here attempt to ascertain. Such inquiries, however delightful and important, (as how can the attention be possibly given to a worthier subject?) cannot be conducted without a minute discussion of difficulties, and a lengthy examination of existing opinions, which would be altogether out of place in a Commentary like the present.

“I love them that love Me,” saith the LORD by his prophet; “and those that seek Me early shall find Me.” (k) It proved so now; for it is added,

9 And as they went to tell His Disciples, behold, JESUS met them, saying, All hail. And they came and held Him by the feet and worshipped Him.

“Thus their obedience to the LORD of the Sabbath, which had kept them till now at their homes, brought about that, instead of embalming a dead body, they should embrace a living one!” (l) as the SPIRIT had said prophetically long before,—“I found Him whom my soul loveth: I held Him, and would not let Him go.” (m) It will be observed that our LORD permitted, in the case of the company of Women, the act of love and homage which He had already forbidden in the case of Mary Magdalene, saying “Touch Me not,” the meaning of which mysterious words will be found assigned in the note on St. John xx. 17.

10 Then said JESUS unto them, Be not afraid: go tell My Brethren that they go into Galilee, and there shall they see Me.

(z) As St. Matth. xii. 40: xvi. 21: xx. 19.

(b) St. Luke xxiv. 4.

(c) St. Matth. xxvi. 32.

(d) Williams.

(e) Williams.

(e) St. John xx. 12.

(f) See below, verse 10.

(g) St. Mark vi. 9.

(h) Song of Sol. iii. 4.

(a) St. Luke xxiv. 6, 7.

(d) St. Mark xvi. 5.

(g) Hilary.

(k) Prov. viii. 17.

See above, on ver. 7; and below, on ver. 16. By His "Brethren," in this place, our LORD cannot mean exclusively His Kinsmen after the flesh; for we find that the Women carried the message to the Disciples, generally.⁽ⁿ⁾ It is probable that He speaks of the little band of Believers, under this endearing name,—being Himself "the first born among many Brethren."^(o)

11 Now when they were going, behold, some of the watch came into the City, and showed unto the chief Priests all the things that were done.

It seems then that what induced the guard to take this step was the visit of the women. The soldiers had ascertained that *He* was departed, whose sepulchre they had been set to watch: they had already seen His female followers make their appearance at "the place where the LORD lay;" indeed, the women were even now running towards Jerusalem with the news that CHRIST had risen from the dead. It was manifest that no time was to be lost: accordingly, "while [*the women*] were going, behold, some of the guard" hastened into the city; and thus were the first to bring thither the unwelcome tidings of what had so recently occurred: unless indeed, (which seems very likely,) those bodies of the Saints, (whose rising was related in the preceding chapter,) had already "gone into the Holy City, and appeared unto many."^(p) It happened therefore that the very mischance which the high Priests had rendered *impossible* by setting a guard, they were obliged to bribe the soldiers to declare had actually taken place!^(q) And why? Because they had to do with Him who "taketh the wise in their own craftiness;"^(r) and by whose SPIRIT it had been said prophetically,—"they have digged a pit before Me, into the midst whereof they are fallen themselves."^(s)

12, 13, 14 And when they were assembled with the elders, and had taken counsel, they gave large money unto the soldiers, saying, Say ye, His Disciples came by night, and stole Him away while we slept. And if this come to the Governor's ears, we will persuade him, and secure you.

So much then for the supposed value of *evidences*, as they are called, for the truth of the Gospel. Could more unexceptionable witnesses of the Resurrection than these, have been imagined? Yet we see how their testimony was treated. Their words wrought no conviction: nay, they caused men to harden their hearts the more. Those wicked Rulers who heard not Moses and the Prophets, would not be persuaded (according to our LORD's true prophecy,) "though One rose from the dead."^(t)—Of the soldiers meantime it is recorded,—

15 So they took the money, and did as they were taught: and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.

The Evangelist now proceeds with the narrative which was suspended at ver. 8: but he passes over a considerable interval of time. How much, cannot indeed be certainly ascertained; but it was more than seven days, and less than forty.

16 Then the eleven Disciples went away into Galilee, into a mountain where JESUS had appointed them.

It is quite remarkable what a prominent place the appearance of our LORD to His Disciples, in Galilee, occupies in St. Matthew's Gospel. It is recorded as the great event,—almost the only event,—after the Resurrection. Nothing else is said concerning the mysterious forty Days which followed the first Easter. The very Ascension of our LORD into Heaven does not obtain the slightest notice. On the other hand, the Angel in the Sepulchre said, "Behold, He goeth before you into Galilee; there shall ye see Him:"^(u)—our SAVIOUR repeated the same assurance shortly

(n) See St. Luke xxiv. 9, 10.

(o) Rom. viii. 29.

(p) St. Matth. xxvii. 53: where see the note.

(q) Compare St. Matth. xxvii. 64, with ver. 13 of the present chapter.

(r) Job v. 13.

(s) Ps. lvii. 6.

(t) St. Luke xvi. 31.

(u) See above, ver. 7.

after,—“Go tell My Brethren that they go *into Galilee*, and there shall they see Me:”(x)—and the sacred narrative hastens on to relate that “then the eleven Disciples went away *into Galilee*, into a mountain where JESUS had appointed them.” In fact this meeting, which was of our LORD’s express appointment, must be regarded as an event of unusual dignity and importance; having been the subject of distinct prophecy,(y)—as indeed it was the *only* appearance which our SAVIOUR is recorded to have foretold.

“Here therefore He is now, with His glorified Body, where he had been so often in His Humiliation. It would seem to indicate that human sympathies and natural attachments were still existing in the condescensions of our risen LORD. It is as if He took to Himself and hallowed such natural sympathies of humanity. As, in St. John’s Gospel, He is found at the accustomed Lake with a few chosen Disciples,(z) so is He now among the Mountains, where He had so often been with them before; and with the people, as before, gathered around Him and them.”(a) For it cannot be doubted that this was that appearance to “above five hundred brethren at once,” of which the Apostle Paul speaks in a well-known place.(b)

Which Mountain this was, is not known; neither can it be declared *when* our Blessed LORD appointed it to the Disciples at the place where He would meet them. A promise that, after His Resurrection, He would go before His little flock into Galilee, we have indeed lately met with:(c) and when He made that promise, He may have also fixed the actual scene of their future meeting: or the Angel who addressed the women in the sepulchre, may have spoken more words than are recorded in ver. 7 above, and have designated the exact locality where it was the will of their risen LORD to manifest Himself to their longing eyes. The entire transaction however, as already observed, evidently belongs to a period much subsequent to the Day of the Resurrection.

17 And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him: but some doubted.

Not some of the “eleven Disciples,” of course. Of *them*, it is expressly recorded that “when they saw Him, *they worshipped Him*.” The last words of the verse should in fact rather be translated “but *others* doubted:” others, namely, of those five hundred brethren, and upwards, who were doubtless present on this occasion.(d)

18 And JESUS came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth.

“The first of the sayings of the great forty days, is that which asserts the Royalty of our Blessed LORD Himself. It is the first in place, for it occurs as the first in the first of the Evangelists; and it is the first also in its own proper order and meaning: for, from the Royalty of CHRIST, the existence of the Church, with all her powers, privileges, and hopes, is directly derived. As a King, He founded His Kingdom: as a King, He commissioned His Ministers: as a King, He laid out the limits and constitution of His Kingdom, according to His own will. . . . Let it, then, be observed, that this Royalty is first fully given in the Resurrection: ‘And JESUS came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth.’”(e)

Thus was the prophecy of Daniel fulfilled, that there should “be given Him Dominion, and Glory, and a Kingdom, that all people, nations, and languages, should serve Him.”(f) All that Satan had once offered Him on the condition of sinful compliance,(g) was now His own *by right*,—a part only of His great “inheritance,”(h) and which he surveys, as at the Temptation He did, from “a Mountain;”—and yet, *not* (as it would appear) from the mountain in Galilee.

“All power is *given* unto Me,”—saith our SAVIOUR CHRIST. “Now, a dominion thus imparted, given, derived, or bestowed, cannot be that which belongeth unto God, as God, founded in the Divine Nature; because whatsoever is such, is absolute and independent. Wherefore His Lordship thus imparted or acquired appertaineth

(x) See above, ver. 10.

(y) St. Matth. xxvi. 32.

(z) St. John xxi. 1, &c.

(a) Williams.

(b) 1 Cor. xv. 6.

(c) St. Matth. xxvi. 32.

(d) See 1 Cor. xv. 6: referred to above, in the note on ver. 16.

(e) Moberly.

(f) Dan. vii. 14.

(g) See St. Matth. iv. 8. 9.

(h) Consider Ps. ii. 8: St. John iii. 35: Rom. viii. 17: Heb. i. 2.

to the Human Nature, and belongeth to our SAVIOUR as the Son of Man. . . . This dominion thus given unto CHRIST in His Human Nature was a direct and plenary power over all things; but was not actually given Him at once, but part while He lived on Earth, part after His Death and Resurrection. For though it be true that "JESUS knew," before His death, 'that the FATHER had given all things into His Hands;' yet it is observable that in the same place it is written, that He likewise knew 'that He was come from God, and went to God;' and part of that power He received when He came from God,—with part He was invested when he went to God: the first, to enable Him,—the second, not only so, but also to reward Him. 'For to this end CHRIST both died, and rose, and revived, that He might be LORD both of the dead and living;'⁽ⁱ⁾ After His Resurrection, He said to His Disciples, 'All power is given unto Me in Heaven and in Earth.' 'He drank of the brook in the way, therefore He hath lifted up His Head.'^(k) Because, 'He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the Cross, therefore God also hath highly exalted Him, and given Him a Name which is above every Name.'^(l)

By virtue of this entire authority, therefore, which he was at liberty to delegate how, and when, and to whomever He would, the Holy One proceeds to give to His Eleven Apostles their great Charge and Commission:—

19 Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST:

"Rather,—“and make disciples of all nations, by baptizing them.” In which words, the largeness of the Apostles' Commission is first to be observed,—not confined, as formerly to “the lost sheep of the House of Israel;”^(m) but wide as the World.

Next, the necessity of Holy Baptism in order to becoming CHRIST'S Disciple, and therefore to Salvation, is to be noticed, as clearly implied in the very terms of our LORD'S Commission to His Apostles. That the Baptism of Infants no less than that of Adults was intended by the Divine Speaker, is abundantly plain from the testimony of Scripture and of Antiquity: but a convincing argument is supplied by the established usage of the Jews themselves with respect to children. It is a striking fact that the Baptism of Infants no less than of full-grown proselytes, was constantly practised. Our LORD made no express mention of Infants therefore, when He charged the Apostles to make Disciples by Baptism; because express mention was superfluous in the case of the persons whom He was addressing.

"From this sacred form of Baptism," says Bishop Pearson, "did the Church derive the rule of Faith; requiring the profession of belief in the FATHER, SON, and HOLY GHOST,—before any could be baptized in their Name."

It might indeed be thought by unlearned persons, from the frequent mention (in the Acts) of baptizing "*in the name of the LORD JESUS*,"⁽ⁿ⁾ that the form of words prescribed by our SAVIOUR was not invariably observed by His Apostles. But besides that the testimony of all Antiquity establishes the direct contrary of this, it is observable from the very tenor of Scripture itself that it must be a mistake to entertain such an opinion. When the disciples of Ephesus, in reply to St. Paul's inquiry—"Have ye received the HOLY GHOST since ye believed?" made answer, "We have not so much as heard whether there be any HOLY GHOST," the Apostle is found straightway to have rejoined—"Unto what then were ye baptized?" "intimating," as the learned writer last quoted, remarks, "that if they were baptized according to the rule of CHRIST, they could not be ignorant that there is an HOLY GHOST;" since they must perforce have been baptized into His Name. They made answer,—“Unto John's Baptism.” Whereupon, it is straightway added—"they were baptized *in the name of the LORD JESUS*."^(o)

"The power of governing the Church which our LORD left with his Apostles and their successors, to the end of the world, (but so that He, according to his promise, is always present with them at the execution of it,)—follows: for here, our LORD gives commission not only to baptize, but likewise to teach those who are His Disciples, to observe whatsoever He had commanded. Whereby the persons whom He addressed, and their successors after them, are empowered both to declare what are

(i) Rom. xiv. 9.

(k) Ps. ex. 7.

(l) Phil. ii. 8, 9. See also Ephes. i. 20, 21. The quotation is from Bp. Pearson.

(m) St. Matth. x. 5, 6. (n) See Acts ii. 38: viii. 16: x. 48: xix. 5. (o) Acts xix. 1 to 5.

those commands of CHRIST which men ought to observe,—and also to use all means to prevail on men to observe them.”(p)

20 teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you:

All nations therefore are to be made Disciples of CHRIST. “And this is to be done in two ways; first, by baptizing them in the Name of the FATHER, the SON, and the HOLY GHOST, and so bringing them into the Church; secondly, by teaching them to observe all things whatsoever CHRIST hath commanded: that so they may be His Disciples indeed; and not only outwardly profess the Faith which He hath taught, but likewise sincerely obey all the commands which He hath enjoined.”(q)

It may be presumed therefore that our LORD,—specially during those great forty days, during which He is said to have “spoken of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God,”(r)—gave commandment to His Apostles concerning the future constitution, government, and instruction of His Church; and to these commands He may be thought here particularly to allude. Such a rite as Confirmation, He may be thought to have now ordained,—which we find presently enjoying Apostolic sanction.(s) Such an institution as the Holy Order of Deacons, He may be thought to have now appointed, which is observed immediately afterwards to arise.(t) Those Doctrines and Divine Truths He may be thought to have now set forth, which the Apostolical Epistles lay down, and enforce, and explain.

But of what avail was this great Commission, unless power and authority were at the same time given, which should enable those who were sent to fulfill their errand? “Who am I, that I should go unto Pharaoh, and that I should bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt?”(u) was the remonstrance of Moses of old: “and therefore, as God answered Moses, saying, ‘Certainly I will be with thee;’(x) so does our SAVIOUR here encourage His Apostles, adding,”(y)

and lo, I am with you alway, *even* unto the end of the World. Amen.

He says, “Lo!”—for every word which follows is weighty and important. “I,” the Eternal SON,—who have all power in Heaven and Earth committed to Me,—“I am with you.” Not “I *will* be with you;” but “I *am* with you:” reminding them thereby of His Divine Essence and Power, to which all things are present. And therefore, as He elsewhere said, “Before Abraham was, I *AM*,”(z) so here He says, “I am with you at all times, to the end of the World, as really as at this present;”(a)—which last words were added, “lest, when the inspired Apostles died, their imperfect and uninspired successors should, in the midst of the strife of worldly tongues, and the abundance of sin, be tempted to doubt whether the mysterious delegation, with all its sacred powers, were continued to them.”(b)

Thus speaks our Emmanuel, that is, “God with us;” (for He hath “dwelt among us;”(c) and when He departed from the Earth, He said to His Disciples that He would be *with them* for ever:—thus does He promise to abide eternally with His Church. On a former occasion, to St. Peter, He sealed His speech concerning that Church with a powerful promise,—namely, that “the gates of Hell shall not prevail against it.”(d) On this occasion, He adds a promise to the like effect,—“And lo, I am with you alway, even unto the end of the World.” “The former of these promises assures us of the continuance of the Church because it is built upon a Rock:(e) the latter giveth not only an assurance of the continuance of the Church, but also the cause of that continuance, which is the presence of CHRIST.(f)

“In short, our SAVIOUR here promises his Apostles that he will always be with them to the end of the World, by His HOLY SPIRIT accompanying and assisting them in the discharge of their Apostolical Office: . . . which amounts to nothing less than this; even that CHRIST, having constituted such an office in his Church, for the government and edification of it to the end of the World, here promiseth that He himself, by his HOLY SPIRIT, will be always present at the execution of

(p) Beveridge.

(q) Beveridge.

(r) Acts viii. 5 to 17: xix. 1 to 6.

(s) Exod. iii. 11.

(t) St. John viii. 58.

(u) See St. John i. 11.

(v) See the note on St. Matthew vii. 25.

(x) Exod. iii. 12: iv. 12, 15, &c.

(y) From Bishop Beveridge.

(z) Acts i. 3.

(1) Acts vi. 1 to 6.

(g) Beveridge.

(h) Moberly.

(i) St. Math. xvi. 18.

(j) Bishop Pearson.

that office, so as to make it effectual to the great ends and purposes for which it was designed.”(g)

Such is, doubtless, the primary purport and intention of our SAVIOUR'S promise. It was addressed to those whom He set over his Family and his Household; and is the Charter of all their successors for ever. This promise gives them Confidence as well as Authority. In the Name of CHRIST, they act; and their acts are valid because they are done in, and through, and by Him. . . . At the same time, these words are in another and inferior, but still in a real sense, the common property of every member of that Society, and will remain so, “even unto the end of the World.” The Blessed Speaker says more than that he is with us “always:” in the text, He declares that he is with us “every day,”—or rather, “*all [our] days:*” by which words the gracious assurance seems to be conveyed that the Holy One and True will be the support and strength, alike of shepherd and of sheep, in all those many unforeseen trials to which “*the days* of the years of man's life” are exposed: those cares of which St. Paul speaks, and of which he felt the weighty burden, because, as he confesses, they came upon him *daily*:(h)—those petty trials and private griefs again, which are the common heritage of all; and which, though little in themselves, yet become great, because according to our LORD'S true predication, they are of *daily* occurrence.(i)

And this promise, as it is the ground of all a Christian's confidence in Life, so is it the very rod and staff of his soul, in the hour of Death likewise. “Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of Death,” says the Psalmist, “I will fear no evil—for *Thou art with me!*”(k)

“CHRIST promised his presence to the Apostles ‘until the end of the World;’ *who* ever made so unhappy a construction as to infer from thence, that for ever after, He would be absent from them?”(l) Assuredly, not only during these the days of their warfare, but hereafter also, when they shall wear crowns in Heaven, it will be the bliss of the Saints to be “all their days” in the presence of their LORD: to exchange the assurance that *He* is with *them*, for the blessed consciousness that *they* are with *Him*: to behold His face, and to “see the King in His Beauty.”(m) “Thou wilt show me the path of Life: in Thy presence is the fullness of joy; and at Thy right Hand there is pleasure for evermore.”(n)

(g) Beveridge.

(h) 2 Cor. xi. 28.

(i) St. Luke ix. 23.

(k) Psalm xxiii. 4.

(l) Bp. Pearson,—referring to St. Matth. i. 25, where see the note.

(m) Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

(n) Psalm xvi. 11.

THE PRAYER.

GRANT, we beseech Thee, ALMIGHTY GOD, that like as we do believe Thy only begotten SON our LORD JESUS CHRIST to have ascended into the heavens; so we may also in heart and mind thither ascend, and with Him continually dwell, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, one God, world without end. Amen.

A PLAIN COMMENTARY

ON

THE FOUR HOLY GOSPELS.

ST. MARK.

CHAPTER I.

1 *The office of John the Baptist.* 9 *JESUS is baptized.* 12 *Tempted.* 14 *He preacheth.* 16 *Calloeth Peter, Andrew, James, and John.* 23 *Healeth one that had a devil.* 29 *Peter's mother-in-law.* 32 *Many diseased persons.* 41 *And cleanseth the leper.*

A VERY ancient tradition relates that St. Mark derived the materials of his Gospel, (under the HOLY SPIRIT,) from the communications of St. Peter the Apostle; with whom he is thought to have resided at Rome. What is remarkable, scarcely ever is St. Peter spoken of, but something is said or omitted which in no way can be so well accounted for, as by supposing that the sacred Narrative was, in some way, influenced by *his* dictation. But a circumstance of yet greater interest, is, the minute and vivid, painter-like manner in which this Evangelist handles every incident in the Life of his LORD and ours. In fact, the Gospel of St. Mark, though the shortest of all, is more minute, graphic, and particular, than any of the others.

If any, therefore, do inquire the reason of the sentence prefixed to the present Gospel,—“It shall be in thy mouth sweet as honey,”^(a)—let them know, that the delight of seeking for instances of the peculiarity just noticed, in the present Gospel, suggested the choice of a motto which should imply that the sacred narrative would be found to possess a wondrous sweetness of its own,—sweetness beyond that of “honey, or the honey-comb.”

1, 2 The beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST the SON of GOD; as it is written in the Prophets, Behold, I send My Messenger before Thy face, which shall prepare Thy way before Thee.

Observe that *the end* of the *Old Testament*, is “*the beginning*” of the *New*. These words are found in Malachi iii. 1.

“For now the Gospel began to dawn,” says Bp. Taylor, “and John was like the morning-star, or the blushings which spring from the windows of the East: foretelling the approach of the Sun of Righteousness.” The Ministry of St. John Baptist is “the Beginning of the Gospel of JESUS CHRIST.” Consider St. Luke xvi. 16; and see the note on St. Luke i. 22.

3 The Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the LORD, make His paths straight.

The words are found in Isaiah xl. 3. The Evangelist adds the words of the older, to those of the later Prophet; showing thereby that there is the most perfect harmony and consent between them.

See the note on St. Matthew iii. 3, and on St. John i. 23. The note on St. Luke iii. 6, may be also read.

4 John did baptize in the Wilderness, and preach the Baptism of Repentance for the Remission of sins.

The reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew iii. 1, 2.

5 And there went out unto him all the land of Judæa, and they of Jerusalem.

“By the great reputation of his sanctity,” says the pious writer already quoted, “he prevailed upon the affections and judgment of the people, who, with much ease believed his doctrine when they had reason to approve his life: for the good example of the Preacher is always the most prevailing homily; his life is his best sermon.”

See a long note on this subject, on St. Matthew iii. 6.

and were all baptized of him in the River of Jordan, confessing their sins.

The Jews, whenever they made Gentile proselytes,—whether male or female, adults or children,—invariably baptized them; to which well-known practice of the nation, our Blessed Lord referred in His farewell charge to His Disciples.^(b) The Forerunner, by the general Baptism of the Nation, here described, taught them that they had so entirely forsaken their duty, so far fallen short of the holiness which God required of them, that they were in His sight no better than strangers, and heathens. They were, therefore, “to be treated as themselves received gentile proselytes, by a Baptism and a new state of life; before they could be fit for the reception of the MESSIAS, or be admitted to His Kingdom.”

6 And John was clothed with camel’s hair, and with a girdle of a skin about his loins; and he did eat locusts and wild honey;

A statement which seems almost copied from St. Matthew iii. 4, where see a long note. It is certain that St. Mark wrote his Gospel with that of St. Matthew lying open before him.

7, 8 and preached, saying, There cometh One mightier than I after me, the latchet of whose shoes I am not worthy to stoop down and unloose. I indeed have baptized you with Water: but He shall baptize you with the HOLY GHOST.

The reader is again referred to the notes on St. Matthew’s Gospel,—iii. 11.—The notes on St. Luke iii. 16, and St. John i. 27, may be also read.

9 And it came to pass in those days, that JESUS came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan.

“Our Lord was baptized,” says an ancient Bishop, “not that He might be cleansed by the waters, but to cleanse them: that, being purified by the flesh of CHRIST, who knew no sin, they might possess the power of Baptism.”

In the words of a great living Writer,—“The sinless Lord underwent ceremonial rites, to which nothing but the defilement of human sin gave being or significance,—because, as He himself declared, it became Him even thus to fulfill all Righteousness, to discharge the debt of our sinful race, and thus commence His exemplar of perfect obedience as Man.”

See the note on St. Matthew iii. 13: and read, if you please, the notes on verses 14 and 15 likewise. The statement that Our Lord came “from Nazareth” to be baptized, is peculiar to the present Gospel.

10, 11 And straightway coming up out of the water He saw the Heavens opened, and the SPIRIT like a Dove descending upon Him:

(b) St. Matthew xxviii. 19.

and there came a Voice from Heaven, *saying*, Thou art My beloved SON, in whom I am well pleased.

A voice from Heaven is heard at the Baptism of CHRIST, when He was about to begin His Ministry: at the Transfiguration:(c) and immediately before the last Passover, when our LORD's Ministry had come to its close.(d)

Concerning the Baptism of CHRIST, the reader will do well to consult the notes on St. Matthew iii. 16 and 17; as well as those on St. Luke iii. 22. See also on St. John i. 34.

12 And immediately

Temptation follows, in the case of our LORD, "immediately." "Let none therefore of His followers, think to go free. If you mean to follow CHRIST, reckon to meet temptations even at first, and so in all the way. Unwise, to put to sea and expect no storms; nothing but fair weather!"—So far, Archbishop Leighton: whose words recall that saying in Ecclesiasticus,—“My Son, if thou come to serve the LORD, *prepare thy soul for Temptation.*”(e)

the SPIRIT driveth Him into the Wilderness.

This, then, is the first event recorded after the Baptism. That the Enemy of souls should desire to possess himself of the house “swept and garnished,”—is only what we are led, from other parts of Scripture, to expect.(f) See the notes on St. Matthew iv. 1, and St. Luke iv. 1.

It has been excellently observed by one of our greatest Divines,—“The Sacraments and other institutions of Religion do not secure against the approach of Temptation; they are rather advances in the Enemy's Kingdom, which provoke His reprisal and attack; and the trials against which the faithful, thus prepared, have to strive are no proof that they are without the HOLY SPIRIT, but the contrary.” The SAVIOUR Himself is declared to have been actually “led” to the scene of His mysterious conflict, “by the SPIRIT.” Now “as many as are led by the SPIRIT of God,” says St. Paul, “they are the sons of God.”(g)

“*Driveth Him*,” here, implies no violence. The word does but describe the gentle guidance of a Shepherd,—as in St. John x. 4, where the same word is employed: a different word and a different expression altogether, from that which is found in St. Luke viii. 29.

13 And He was there in the Wilderness forty days, tempted of Satan;

Our Blessed LORD was tempted for forty days: but the great encounter, wherein He vanquished His Adversary, belongs (as St. Luke especially notices,) to the *last* of those days.

Goliath, in like manner, drew near to the Camp of Israel, “morning and evening, and presented himself forty days:”(h) but the conflict with David was on the last day. Our LORD's great ancestor, who was also His most remarkable type, then took from His enemy “his armour wherein he trusted, and spoiled his goods.”(i)

Take notice that the Captain of our Salvation overcame the Enemy with three several texts of Scripture. Those places, therefore, are as “smooth stones” which He gathered out of this “brook in the way.”—David “chose him *five*.” It was because the lords of the Philistines were so many.(k) David's Son chooses Him *three*: because so many are the great divisions of human Sin;(l)—so many were the assaults which He had to encounter.

and was with the wild beasts; and the Angels ministered unto Him.

This language might serve to describe the fate of the “man greatly beloved,” in the den of lions. See the Book of the Prophet Daniel,—vi. 16 and 22.

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who notices that the scene of our SAVIOUR's—like the scene of Adam's—Temptation, caused Him to be “with the wild beasts.”

(c) St. Matth. xvii. 5.

(d) St. John xii. 28.

(e) Eccles. ii. 1.

(f) St. Matth. xii. 43. St. Luke xi. 24.

(g) Rom. viii. 14.

(h) 1 Sam. xvii. 16.

(i) Compare St. Luke xi. 22, with 1 Sam. xvii. 54.

(k) 1 Samuel vi. 4, &c.

(l) 1 St. John ii. 16.

The concluding heavenly notice corresponds, doubtless, with St. Matthew's account of what occurred when the Temptation was ended. "Then the Devil leaveth Him; and, behold, Angels came and ministered unto Him." (*m*)

Thus briefly then does St. Mark dismiss our LORD's Temptation in the Wilderness: in its nature, perhaps, the most mysterious,—in its consequences, the most momentous,—transaction recorded in the Gospel of CHRIST. The reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew, ch. iv. 1 to 11, and on St. Luke, ch. iv. 1 to 13, (where the Temptation is recorded more fully,) for some remarks on the subject.

In this place it shall be only further pointed out that the most entire reality of *Temptation* does not imply, of necessity, the least degree of *Sinfulness* in him who is the subject of it. Adam was tempted while in a state of Grace: and the beloved Disciple says of the Second Adam, whose Temptation is here recorded,—“In Him is *no Sin*.” (*n*) The very instincts of that human nature which our LORD entirely assumed, make *Pleasure*, an object of desire; and *Pain*, an object of dread: and whenever the prospect of the former, to be earned as the price of disobedience to God's Will,—or of the latter, to be incurred as the penalty of submission to it,—is presented to the rational soul,—just so often does Man incur Temptation, in the strictest sense of the word. Only *then* is he sinful, when he accepts the Pleasure or refuses the Pain.

And of the nature above described was the Temptation of our Blessed SAVIOUR. St. James has indeed said that “a man is tempted when he is *drawn away of his own lust*, and enticed.” (*o*) but this description applies to man's *fallen nature*: and is clearly not applicable to our LORD,—any more than to our first Parents while they were yet in Paradise. Adam was created upright: and our LORD came “*in the likeness*” only, “of sinful flesh.” (*p*) The first, after his Fall, lusted to evil, doubtless: but the second retained His innocency, and *never* fell. In *Him*, therefore, Sin had not any place, nor could have.

Yet must the display of such perfect virtue, on the part of the Son of Man, have been attended with difficulty, as we may most humbly and reverently assume. Of this fact, the later scenes of His mortal history are useful to convince us; as when the SON submitted His own Human Will, not without pangs of keenest agony, to the Will of the FATHER. (*q*) And we may not fail to remember that the perfection of Human Nature in Him must have heightened in His case every trial,—rendered more acute every suffering to which, for us men and for our Salvation, He condescended to submit.

14 Now after that John was put in prison, JESUS came into Galilee,

The Reader is referred to a long note on St. Matthew iv. 12.

What a mighty consolation is contained in this brief statement! How solemn a warning against despondency, to the end of Time!—“John was put in prison:” men's hopes became clouded: on all those who had flocked to his Baptism, and listened to his preaching, on the banks of Jordan, the sun seemed to have set for ever: the very Disciples who had waited upon him, (as we read in St. John's first chapter, verses 37 to 42,) had returned to their nets. But, “when John was put in prison,—*JESUS came into Galilee*!”—God hath wonderful consolations in store for those who love Him. He can do for us beyond all that we can ask or think. When one instrument is removed, He can provide another. When human hopes are withdrawn, Divine comforts appear. Heaven begins where Earth ends.

The Reader may, if he pleases, read the notes on St. Matthew iv. 17.

15 preaching the Gospel of the Kingdom of God, and saying, The time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand: repent ye, and believe the Gospel.

16 Now as He walked by the Sea of Galilee,

This Lake,—which, in the Old Testament, is spoken of as “the Sea of Chinnereth,” (*r*)—in the New, is sometimes called “the Lake of Tiberias;” (*s*) sometimes, “the Lake of Genesaret;” (*t*) sometimes, “the Sea of Galilee.” At its North-

(*m*) 1 St. John iv. 11.

(*n*) 1 St. John iii. 5.

(*o*) St. James i. 13.

(*p*) Romans viii. 3.

(*q*) St. Matt. xxvi. 39, 42, 44,—compared with St. Luke xxii. 41 to 44.

(*r*) Numbers xxxiv. 11. Joshua xiii. 27.

(*s*) St. John xxi. 1.

(*t*) St. Luke v. 1.

Western extremity, stood the town of Capernaum; (*u*) so that this Lake proved the scene of many of the miracles, many of the parables, and many of the Discourses of our LORD. Travellers describe it as a sheet of water of singular interest and beauty; in length about sixteen miles, and in breadth, about eight. It is surrounded by mountains; and, like other mountain-lakes, is subject to storms which, (in the words of a recent Traveller,) make it *boil* with violence. In repose, its waters assume a grey, leaden hue.

17, 18 He saw Simon and Andrew his brother casting a net into the sea: for they were Fishers. And JESUS said unto them, Come ye after Me, and I will make you to become Fishers of men. And straightway they forsook their nets, and followed Him.

Leighton remarks upon it,—“This was as Elijah’s touch to Elisha: ‘What have I done to thee?’ (*x*) Did our hearts once hear His voice, net would not entangle us, nor cables bind us. No friends, nor parents, nor business would hold us. We should break from all, yea, should break from all to follow Him.”

19, 20 And when He had gone a little farther thence, He saw James the son of Zebedee, and John his brother, who also were in the ship mending their nets. And straightway He called them: and they left their Father Zebedee in the ship with the hired servants, and went after Him.

For several remarks on every part of this incident, the Reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew iv. 18 to 22. What has been there so fully commented on, may be passed by, in silence, here: for the words of the two Evangelists in describing the Transaction, are *almost*, (though by no means *quite*,) the same. For instance, the mention of the “hired servants,” in ver. 20, is peculiar to the present Gospel; and it suggests two remarks: 1st. that we are not to think too meanly of the temporal condition of these first followers of the LAMB: 2nd. that Zebedee was not left *alone*, when his sons, at the call of CHRIST, left his side.

St. Luke has related the call of the four Disciples in a very different manner. Compare St. Luke v. 1 to 11,—and see the notes there.

21, 22 And they went into Capernaum; and straightway on the Sabbath day He entered into the Synagogue, and taught. And they were astonished at His doctrine: for He taught them as one that had authority, and not as the Scribes.

The self-same words recur in St. Matthew vii. 28,—where see the note. They are descriptive, in that place, of the effect which our SAVIOUR’S teaching produced on those who listened to the Sermon on the Mount. Take notice, that they are immediately followed by a cluster of miracles (in the 8th and 9th chapters of St. Matthew’s Gospel,) as if to show that His mighty Words were immediately confirmed by His mighty Works,—“signs following,” more wondrous even than the Discourse to which they bore witness. And so it is in this place: for observe what follows.

23 And there was in their Synagogue a man with an unclean Spirit;

Not even the sanctity of the congregation deters the unclean Spirit. He ventures even there!

24 And he cried out, Saying, Let *us* alone; what have we to do with Thee, Thou JESUS of Nazareth? art Thou come to destroy us?

What wonder that the unclean Spirit should thus cry out,—with words of hate, and almost of defiance? Were not these cures so many victorious inroads which the Stronger than the strong (*y*) was daily making into the Kingdom of Darkness,—bold invasions of “the strong man’s palace,”—foretastes of a strife which was never to

(*u*) St. Matth. iv. 13, and note there.

(*x*) 1 Kings xix. 20.

(*y*) St. Luke xi. 21, 22.

cease until He who is "Mighty to save" should have "put all enemies under His feet?" (z)

"Let us alone: what have we to do with Thee?"—says the unclean Spirit; as if conscious that the common danger of all his race was approaching. And again,—*'Art Thou come to destroy us?'*—which words further suggest not only "a certain fearful looking for of judgment," (as the Apostle speaks,) (a) but an expectation and a belief like that which we profess in the *Te Deum*:—"We believe that Thou shalt come to be our Judge."

On the appellation—"Jesus of Nazareth," see the last note on St. Luke iv. 34. For further remarks on this Miracle, the Reader is referred to all the notes on the last-named place.

I know Thee who Thou art, the Holy One of God.

"God is a Spirit." (b) Accordingly, the World of Spirits,—or rather, the *two* Worlds, Heaven and Hell,—have already freely acknowledged their Lord and King: the one, in songs of rapture, (c)—the other, with cries of despair. *Man* is more slow to recognize "the King in His Beauty" (d) under that thick disguise. "He was in the World; and the World was made by Him;" and yet, "the World knew Him not!" (e)

See the notes on the last half of St. Luke iv. 34.

25 And JESUS rebuked him, saying, Hold thy peace and come out of him.

See the first note on St. Luke iv. 35:—and observe that it is not here, "*the LORD rebuke thee!*" as when "Michael the Archangel, contending with the Devil, disputed about the body of Moses;" (f) but a direct rebuke, administered in His own Name.

26 And when the unclean Spirit had torn him, and cried with a loud voice, he came out of him.

Behold the last act of defeated malice! The unclean spirit may not speak. Christ hath already chained up his tongue from uttering words. But a yell of despair he may yet pour forth,—and *that* he straightway does, "*with a loud voice.*"

Neither may he any longer occupy his human dwelling-place. Christ hath set his miserable bondsman free. But to convulse and rend the frame which he may no longer defile with his presence,—*that* is still in his power. Accordingly, he *tears* him: and, (as St. Luke records,) *throws him in the midst*, before he submits to the sentence from which there is no reprieve.

See the last note on St. Luke iv. 35.

27, 28 And they were all amazed, insomuch that they questioned among themselves, saying, What thing is this? what new doctrine is this? for with authority commandeth He even the unclean spirits, and they do obey Him. And immediately His fame spread abroad throughout all the region round about Galilee.

29 And forthwith, when they were come out of the synagogue, they entered into the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John.

It is called "Peter's house" by St. Matthew,—viii. 14; where see the note. Some remarks on this miracle will also be found in the notes on St. Luke iv. 39.

30 But Simon's Wife's Mother lay sick of a fever, and anon they tell Him of her.

Christ needed not to be told of this suffering inmate of Simon's House; neither does He need to be told of *our* necessities. He knows them all before we ask, as well as our ignorance in asking: but He requires us, all the same, to make our

(z) 1 Cor. xv. 25.

(c) St. Luke ii. 13, 14.

(a) Hebrews x. 27.

(d) Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

(f) St. Jude ver. 9.

(b) St. John iv. 24.

(e) St. John i. 10.

needs the subject of Prayer,—“to ask” in order that it may “be given” unto us. And the same lesson is taught us by the present incident; for it was not until “they besought Him for her,” as St. Luke declares, (iv. 38,) that He wrought the wondrous cure which the Evangelist proceeds to describe.

31 And He came and took her by the hand, and lifted her up;

“In Him was Life!”(g) and to be so “lifted up” by Him, was to be filled, anew, with Health and Vigour. The dying flame was re-kindled; for the lamp had been replenished at the very Fountain of Life.

St. Luke here supplies a striking circumstance which the other Evangelists omit. See St. Luke iv. 39 and the note there.

and immediately the fever left her, and she ministered unto them.

Take notice, therefore, that here was a double miracle. Not only had the fever been driven away by His Almighty word, but the wasted and enfeebled frame had been braced with new vigour; for we read that she “ministered unto them,”—that is, probably, waited upon the blessed company while they partook of their mid-day meal. Restoration to health by any ordinary means would not have enabled Simon’s Mother-in-law to do this. We all know that it fares far otherwise with a patient on the first recovery from fever.

Other instances of a double miracle are supplied by,—the first miraculous draught of fishes, when the net brake,(h) and yet the fish were retained:—the man born blind, who was not only blessed with the gift of sight,(i) but also with the use of his eyes:—the stilling of the storm, when not only the wind ceased to rage, but the waters of the lake were reduced to a state of “great calm.”(k)—Thus, also, when the Widow of Nain’s Son was raised from death, he “*began to speak*!”(l)—while the daughter of Jairus, not only “*arose and walked*,” but required “*that something should be given her to eat*.”(m)

And surely a great lesson is taught us by all this! Not only are we reminded hereby that His ways are not like man’s ways; but anxious thoughts are repressed, while we perceive that all His works are perfect:—that He can not only expel calamity, but remove its consequences also; and provide a double remedy as often as a double remedy is required.

32 And at even when the sun did set, they brought unto Him all that were diseased, and them that were possessed with devils.

The two preceding miracles were performed on the Sabbath-day: see verses 21 and 29. “At even, when the sun did set,” the Jewish Sabbath came to a close, and the first day of the week, the *Christian* Sabbath began.(n) The people availed themselves of this moment, therefore, to bring their sick, (an act which would have been deemed a profanation of the Sabbath,) into the presence of the Great Physician:—a lively emblem of the great purpose to which that day was to be hereafter consecrated,—namely, to the special supply of spiritual needs, and the cure of spiritual ailments.

33 And all the city was gathered together at the door.

“The door,”—that is, the door of St. Peter’s house: the door so well known to him who supplied St. Mark with materials for his Gospel! See the note at the beginning of the present chapter. Compare St. Mark ii. 2, and St. Matthew, ix. 10.

34 And He healed many that were sick of divers diseases, and cast out many devils; and suffered not the devils to speak, because they knew Him.

See the notes on St. Luke iv. 34.

35 And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out, and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.

(g) St. John i. 4.

(h) St. Luke v. 6.

(i) St. John ix. 7.

(k) St. Matth. viii. 26.

(l) St. Luke vii. 15.

(m) St. Mark v. 42, 43.

(n) See Leviticus xxiii. 32, and compare Nehemiah xiii. 19.

36, 37, 38 And Simon and they that were with Him followed after Him. And when they had found Him, they said unto Him, All *men* seek for Thee. And He said unto them, Let us go into the next towns, that I may preach there also: for therefore came I forth.

Observe how much more particularly all this is related by St. Mark than by St. Luke,—iv. 42, 43. Remember the first note on the present chapter.

39 And He preached in their Synagogues throughout all Galilee, and cast out devils.

See the note on St. Luke iv. 44. He preached,—“for therefore came He forth.” The “*Sower went forth to sow His Seed!*”

40 And there came a Leper to Him, beseeching Him, and kneeling down to Him, and saying unto Him, If Thou wilt, Thou canst make me clean.

St. Mark alone it is, who describes this attitude of the Leper. From St. Luke's Gospel, (v. 12,) we learn that he also “fell on his face.” His speech is a very touching one. It *implies* a prayer; yet, in reality, nothing is *asked*. It is rather a profession of perfect Faith, and a humble “*Thy Will be done.*” Let us learn from his words, says an ancient, to commit all our bodily infirmities to the will of God,—“who knows what is best for us, and disposes all things as He will.”

41 And JESUS, moved with compassion, put forth *His* hand, and touched him,

The Son of Man was “moved with compassion;”—concerning which statement, see the first note on St. John i. 14; and the first note on St. Matthew viii. 10.—Take notice, that He “put forth His hand, and *touched* the leper,”—although this was an act strictly forbidden by the Mosaic Law:(*o*) thereby showing that He, (in that He had *made* the Law,) was superior to the Law, as an Eastern Bishop observes; and convincing men that “unto the pure, all things are pure.”(*p*) But it should be observed that our LORD, though He went beyond the *letter* of the ancient command, yet did not transgress its *spirit*: for it was only because the touch of a Leper conveyed *defilement*, that contact was forbidden; but on the pure person of the second Adam no defilement could pass. He could convey purity, but could not receive pollution. In the words of an Eastern Bishop,—“His Hand became not unclean by the Leper; but the Leper became clean by His Holy Hand.”

Delightful it is to notice the points of resemblance and of diversity between the accounts of the same miracle in different Gospels. “The cleansing of the Leper” is found besides in St. Matthew's Gospel,—viii. 2 to 4; and St. Luke's,—v. 12 to 15. The reader is referred, once for all, to the notes on both those places.

and saith unto him, I will; be thou clean.

The very words, doubtless, which the miserable man most of all longed to hear.

42 And as soon as He had spoken, immediately the leprosy departed from him, and he was cleansed.

“*As soon as he had spoken;*”—so instantaneous was the cure! “The leprosy departed from him:”—as if a messenger of Satan were spoken of!

43, 44 And He straitly charged him, and forthwith sent him away; and saith unto him, See thou say nothing to any man; but go thy way, show thyself to the priest, and offer for thy cleansing those things which Moses commanded, for a testimony unto them.

This command, which our LORD often repeated,(*q*) to “say nothing to any man,”

(*o*) Leviticus v. 3.

(*q*) As, in St. Mark vii. 36, and St. Luke v. 14.

(*p*) Titus i. 15.

is somewhat mysterious and difficult: for on another occasion, our SAVIOUR commanded one whom He had healed, to return home and tell his friends "how great things the LORD had done for him." (r) The first note on St. Matt. viii. 4 may be consulted, as containing a partial explanation of the difficulty. See also below,—the last note on the present chapter. And the Reader is further referred to the note on St. Mark v. 31.

45 But he went out, and began to publish *it* much, and to blaze abroad the matter,

He was so full of his blessedness, that he could not keep it a secret. Other persons, whom our SAVIOUR had in like manner cured, and commanded to keep silence, seem to have found it, in like manner, impossible to restrain themselves. See St. Matth. ix. 30, 31; and St. Mark vii. 36.

insomuch that JESUS could no more openly enter into the city, but was without in desert places: and they came to Him from every quarter.

Here then we see *one* reason why our LORD may have enjoined silence on the Leper; for it appears that, in consequence of his disobedience, the SON of MAN could no longer appear openly in the city! Doubtless, He wished that men should come to Him rather as an act of individual Faith, than troop to Him in crowds,—as to a Physician with the reputation of more than human skill; whose very touch was health,—and who had never been known to lay hands on any one in vain. It requires little reflection to perceive that a certain degree of privacy in the working of His miracles was sometimes necessary,—or it would have been literally impossible to move from place to place: and some caution was needed, at least at present,—or the malice of the Jews might have been aroused, before the SAVIOUR'S "time was come." The note on St. Matt. xii. 21, may further be consulted on this subject.

But it may be remarked, in conclusion, that the Christian who seeks to follow his SAVIOUR'S example in all things, and who would fain see *here*, also, a lesson for help and guidance, will find that he is taught *Humility* while he pursues a course like that of our LORD, here described. He will learn that good deeds should be done in private, and that benefits conferred should shun publicity: that it is well, on doing a favour, to say—"See thou say nothing to any man."

In the words of an excellent living writer,—“Our LORD'S injunction does indeed for the time appear to have been spoken in vain; yet His Word shall not return to Him void, but perform its purpose:(s) and if in nothing else, yet in this, that even to this Day it remains a witness to us, teaching us to avoid all Vain-glory in acts of Charity,—although indeed it may be true that Glory and Honour will ever pursue those who flee from them; and flee from those who anxiously pursue them.”

(r) St. Mark v. 19.

(s) Isaiah iv. 11.

THE PRAYER.

By the mystery of Thy holy Incarnation; By Thy holy Nativity and Circumcision; By Thy Baptism, Fasting, and Temptation;

GOOD LORD, deliver us!

CHAPTER II.

1 CHRIST *healeth one sick of the palsy.* 14 *Calleft Matthew from the receipt of custom.* 15 *Eateth with publicans and sinners.* 18 *Excuseth His disciples for not fasting,* 23 *and for plucking the ears of corn on the Sabbath day.*

1 AND again he entered into Capernaum after *some* days; and it was noised that He was in the house.

2 And straightway many were gathered together, insomuch that there was no room to receive *them*, no, not so much as about the door:

The Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark i. 33. Also to the note at the beginning of St. Mark i.

and He preached the Word unto them.

3 And they come unto Him, bringing one sick of the palsy, which was borne of four.

Disease doth, in a most lively manner, set forth the nature of Sin;—and the disorders of the Body often aptly represent the disorders of the Soul. Leprosy has been already brought before us.^(a) Palsy,—which while it leaves the Will free, denies to the Body, or to some member of it, the power of complying with the dictates of the Will,—foreibly reminds us of that infirmity of spiritual purpose, so well known to every child of Adam; and which wrung from the great Apostle his memorable complaint:—“What I would, that I do not; but what I hate, that I do. . . . Now then, it is no more I, . . . but Sin that dwelleth in me. . . . For to will is present with me; but how to perform that which is good, I find not. For the good that I would, I do not: but the evil that I would not, that I do. . . . I find then a law, that, when I would do good, evil is present with me. For I delight in the Law of God, after the inward man: but I see another Law in my members, warring against the Law of my Mind, and bringing me into captivity to the Law of Sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—or rather, “from this body of Death.”^(b)

He reads the Gospels to little purpose, who passes lightly by an analogy of this kind, when it is pointed out to him. Doubt not but what the cure of *palsy* was here singled out for record, from the many thousand cures wrought by our Lord, with a wise and mysterious purpose; and that it is at our peril that we turn the page, and close the book, without concern or inquiry as to what may be the message of the SPIRIT therein, to ourselves.

It has been elsewhere remarked, that the Commentator plants a most timid and uncertain foot, (timid *because* uncertain,) when he ventures on the allegorical interpretation of Scripture, without the express guidance of the SPIRIT; nor will he here be so rash as to offer any remark which may seem to overstep the bounds of the severest soberness. “This charitable work of theirs,” however, who brought the helpless paralytic to CHRIST,—and whose faith may almost seem to have been accepted by Him (in the presence of many witnesses) as a pledge or earnest of the other’s sincerity,—cannot but remind us of the act of those persons who bring Infants to CHRIST in Holy Baptism. “Son, thy sins be forgiven thee,” were the words addressed to the poor sufferer: and how do those words remind us of what

(a) See St. Mark i. 40 to 41: and the notes on St. Matth. viii. 2, and on the last part of St. Luke v. 13.

(b) Romans vii. 15 to 24.

takes place in that "one Baptism for the Remission of Sins," whereby we are made members of CHRIST, and children of God! Endued with new powers,—born to a new Life,—we henceforth "die from sin, and rise again unto Righteousness: continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections, and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living."

See the note on St. Luke v. 20: also St. John v. 7.

4 And when they could not come nigh unto Him for the press, they uncovered the roof where He was: and when they had broken *it* up, they let down the bed wherein the sick of the palsy lay.

See the notes on St. Luke v. 19.

"They went upon the housetop," as St. Luke relates, *(c)* and let the poor sufferer "down through the tiling, with his couch, into the midst before JESUS." A remarkable proceeding, truly; reminding us, that where there is a living earnest desire, no obstacles can keep men from CHRIST's presence. Faith, verily, ever finds the way,—or *makes* it. These men will "uncover the roof where He is," rather than be debarred of the thing they long for. Love still effects its purpose. And this eager temper He approves. Neither violence, nor rudeness, in such a cause, is noted by Him as such. But, as it follows,

5 When JESUS saw their faith,

With which, it is not unreasonable to suppose that there was combined the faith of the afflicted man himself; or he would not have suffered himself to be so let down. See the note on the latter part of St. Matthew ix. 2. At the same time it is only right to point out that not a syllable is said, in any of the three Gospels, to warrant such a conclusion; *(d)* and it is safest always to keep close to Scripture,—neither adding nor taking away. *(e)* When, therefore, we read concerning our merciful SAVIOUR, that, on seeing "*their* faith,"—

He said unto the sick of the palsy, Son, thy sins be forgiven thee.

we are disposed to see in this statement a gracious intimation of a known doctrine,—namely, that men's prayers, by virtue of the Great Intercession, avail not only for themselves, but for others also. Nor is this case by any means a singular one. The Nobleman's son at Capernaum, *(f)*—the Centurion's servant, *(g)*—Jairus' daughter, *(h)*—the daughter of the Woman of Canaan, *(i)*—and Demoniaes, on more than one occasion, *(k)*—were restored at the intercession of others;—Fathers, Mothers, Masters, Friends. And God be praised, that it was, and is so! What solace greater than *that* which is hereby provided for all? . . . Who can tell how often we may have been preserved, in answer to the prayer of another, when we had forgotten to pray for ourselves?

"This," says Leighton, speaking of our LORD's address, "though not appearing to be the errand, was yet the most important part of the cure, the root of blessing and blessedness; removing the root of all care and misery. Whether the sick man did most of all, or did at all, desire or expect this at the hands of JESUS CHRIST, we cannot tell; but if he thought not of it, (and we cannot suppose that he *did*), oh, what a surprise of love! It is good coming to JESUS on *any* terms, on *any* errand. Some come, driven by outward afflictions; and yet return delivered from Sin and Eternal Death!"

"Thy sins be forgiven thee," is what our LORD said to the woman "which was a sinner," in the Pharisee's house,—St. Luke vii. 48; on which occasion, He added the words,—"*Thy* faith hath saved thee." But it does not appear that the sinful woman was afflicted with any disease: so that the import of both sayings seems to be one and the same. And this leads us to suspect that our SAVIOUR's words addressed to the Leper, in St. Luke xvii. 19,—"*Go* thy way: *thy* faith hath made thee whole;"—to the blind Beggar, in St. Luke xviii. 42,—"*Receive* thy sight: *thy* faith hath saved thee;"—and to the Woman with the issue of blood, in St. Mark v. 34,—"*Thy* faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy

(c) St. Luke v. 19.

(d) Consider St. Matth. ix. 2: St. Mark ii. 5: and St. Luke v. 20.

(e) Rev. xxii. 19.

(f) St. John iv. 49, 50.

(g) St. Matthew viii. 13.

(h) St. Luke viii. 50.

(i) St. Matth. xv. 28.

(k) St. Matth. ix. 32, 33: xvii. 14 to 18, &c.

plague:"—all implied the cure of *spiritual*, rather than of *bodily* infirmity; and proclaimed the close connection which subsists between Suffering and Sin. Compare that saying of our LORD's to the man "which had an infirmity thirty and eight years,"—"Behold thou art made whole: *sin no more*, lest a worse thing come unto thee."^(l)

Sometimes—as in the case of the blind Beggar—the remission of Sin, and the act of bodily healing, take place in the same instant: here, they are kept distinct; and the circumstance is full of interest, instruction and wonder. It seems to be implied that the loosening of the joints from which this man suffered, arose from his being "tied and bound with the chain of his sins:"—and that, in order to the firm bracing of those limbs, the chain which bound them, must first be loosened and undone.

Our SAVIOUR thus reminded men that the *Forgiveness of Sins* was the very purpose of His coming: and that these cures of bodily diseases, though clear proofs of His divine Power and Goodness, were but symbols of that other mainly intended, and highest mercy. He drew men towards himself, by all methods;—chiefly through their bodily ailments, and temporal needs: yet, what anxiety does He ever display to convince them that their maladies lie deeper—that their wants are of a more urgent nature, than they suppose! . . . Consider such places as the following:—St. John iv. 10, 13, 14, 15: vi. 26, 27, 34, 35, 50, 51, 53, 54, &c.

See also the notes on the latter part of St. Mark v. 30; and on 32.

6 But there were certain of the Scribes sitting there, and reasoning in their hearts,

They were awe-struck by His Majesty; and could not utter the thoughts of their heart. Yet had our LORD only spoken a few ordinary words: and if they were blasphemous words, there was no reason why they should not have been declared to be so! . . . That the Divinity of the SECOND PERSON in the Blessed Trinity must, in the days of his humiliation, have many a time flashed through the poor fleshly mantle in which He had enshrined himself, cannot be doubted. Delightful is it to be permitted, thus indirectly, even *from what is not said* in Scripture, to notice some of the occasions when this took place. See the last note on St. Matthew vii.

7 Why doth this *man* thus speak blasphemies? who can forgive sins but GOD only?

An old writer remarks,—“Great is the madness of an unbelieving people; who, though they have confessed that it is of God alone to forgive sins, believe not that it is God when he forgives sins.”

Observe, however, that the Holy One had not said, “*I forgive thee*,”—but, “*Thy sins be forgiven*.” He had said no more, therefore, than a Prophet may safely say. Or, if the Divine Majesty of His manner even suggested that He was doing more than *declare* a sentence, (as indeed He *was*,)—should not this have raised a suspicion that surely they beheld the MESSIAH,—whose Advent they knew to be near at hand, and who was to bring Remission of Sins with Him?^(m) But these wicked men act the usual part of the wicked. They put the worst possible construction on our LORD's saying. Sinful and envious themselves, their eyes are blinded to the “*true Light*,” and can discern nothing but blasphemy in Him who is their CREATOR and their God. Now, the punishment of Blasphemy, by the Law of Moses, was *Death*.⁽ⁿ⁾

8 And immediately when JESUS perceived in His Spirit that they so reasoned within themselves,

For it was *by His Divine Spirit* that He was “a Discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.”^(o) Compare, by all means, what is said in St. Mark v. 30.

He said unto them, Why reason ye these things in your hearts?

As if He had said,—O ye Pharisees, since ye say Who can forgive sins, but God only? I answer you, Who can tell the secrets of the heart, but God alone? I will

(l) St. John v. 14.

(m) Isaiah xliii. 25.

(n) Leviticus xxiv. 16.

(o) Hebrews iv. 12.

convince you that I "search the heart: I try the reins," by revealing to these bystanders what it is that now occupies your minds.^(p) Know, thereby, that I am the LORD. You disbelieved my former saying, that I could forgive sins: behold, I add a miracle,—for I lay open to you your secret thoughts!

Consider how the proof that He possessed such knowledge, had already wrought conviction in the guileless Nathanael,—St. John i. 49; and in the whole Apostolic Body: for compare St. John xvi. 19 and 30.

A second miracle follows; one, which appealed sensibly to their gross minds,—and which no unbelief could gainsay, no subtlety evade. It may very well be, that the form which the unbelief of His enemies secretly took, was, that of a sneer at the Divine Speaker,—for having set up such a claim as it was impossible either to test, or to disprove. To this, our LORD proceeds to address himself:

9 Whether is it easier to say to the sick of the palsy, *Thy sins be forgiven thee*: or to say,

As our LORD said to the impotent man at the pool of Bethesda,^(q)—

Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk?

Of course, one form of words was just as easily spoken as the other. Our LORD, therefore, meant not *that*.—To cure the Soul again, obviously rests with GOD only; whereas, the cure of the Body, is often effected (under GOD) by human means. Neither was *that* therefore what our LORD meant by the saying in the text.—But His words imply that since the announcement,—"*Thy sins be forgiven thee*," led to no visible result; and was therefore easily made; whereas, the command to Arise and walk, must, if obeyed at all, be followed by a most amazing spectacle,—He was about to convince the Scribes by performing an act which they looked upon as one of the privileges reserved to ALMIGHTY GOD, that, at least, they had no excuse for calling in question His power in another respect. He does not prove that He could do the *harder* thing, by doing the *easier*: for that would be absurd. But He makes a mighty appeal to their Faith,—or rather to their Reason. The argument was overwhelming, as addressed *to them*.

10 But that ye may know that the Son of Man hath power on Earth to forgive sins,

On the title "Son of Man," see the note on St. Matthew viii. 20.—Observe, that here our LORD expressly claims the power of forgiving Sin. Above, (verse 5,) He had only said, "*Thy sins be forgiven thee*."

"He says in a marked manner, 'hath *power on Earth* to forgive sins,'" observes an ancient; "in order to show that He hath joined the power of the Divine to the Human Nature by an inseparable union: for although He 'was made Man,' yet He remained 'The Word of God.' . . . His Human Nature did not in the least take away from those things which essentially belonged to His Divinity."

11 (He saith to the sick of the palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house.

"Whosoever He pardons Sin," says pious Leighton, "He also makes the soul able and nimble to 'run in the way of His Commandments;'^(r) to carry its bed, that before carried it: to command and wield at pleasure those low things whereon before it rested."

Mark how sudden and how complete is the cure:—

12 And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all: insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified GOD, saying, We never saw it on this fashion.

All of them were "*amazed*." St. Luke says they "*were filled with fear*."^(s) We read not that *any* of them *believed*!

Amazing, indeed, must the cure have been: and the manner of it, which all the three Evangelists relate in precisely the same lively way, must have been singu-

(p) Jeremiah xvii. 10. (q) St. John v. 8. (r) Psalm cxix. 32. (s) St. Luke v. 26.

larly striking. Our LORD appears to have suddenly broken off His calm reasoning with His enemies; and turning round to the palsied man, as he lay on his bed, prostrate and helpless before Him,—commanded him to perform three acts, each one more improbable than the other; and the man did them all three in succession;—the last, being to *walk out of the House*, in the presence of the whole assembly: leaving the envious Jews, silent and confounded, face to face with our LORD!

Was not this the self-same Voice which, in the beginning, had said “Let there be Light! and there was Light:” which “made the stars also,”—and then sent them on their heavenly way rejoicing?

13 And He went forth again by the sea-side; and all the multitude resorted unto Him, and He taught them.

How many unobtrusive statements of this kind do we meet with in the Gospels! How many hours of precious, heavenly teaching, thus dismissed in a few words! . . . Is it perhaps implied that St. Matthew,—whose call is related in the next verse,—was one of those who listened to the Discourse of our SAVIOUR, on this occasion?

14 And as He passed by, he saw Levi the son of Alphæus, sitting at the receipt of custom, and said unto him, Follow Me. And he arose and followed Him.

This was St. Matthew,—“the Publican,” as he styles himself,^(t) in consequence of his worldly calling. Our LORD, on His way to “the sea-side,” saw this man sitting at the toll-house of Capernaum, beside the lake; and called him to His side. It was probably his office to levy a tax or tribute of some kind, on persons crossing from the Eastern to the North-Western side of the Sea of Galilee.

But was this *all* that then occurred? It may well be suspected that something is here passed over, which it concerns us not to know. Enough for us, to be convinced that at the SAVIOUR’s summons, a heart like that of St. Matthew was prepared to yield prompt obedience. “If the loadstone can attract iron,” says an ancient, “how much more can the LORD of the Creation draw to himself whom he will.” Consider, however, St. Matthew iv. 18 to 22, or St. Mark i. 16 to 20,—as compared with St. Luke v. 1 to 11. Compare, again, St. Matthew ix. 2, with St. Mark ii. 1 to 5, or with St. Luke v. 17 to 20; and consider how much is omitted by the first Evangelist.

The “great Feast,” which the Evangelist proceeds to describe,—and at which St. Matthew entertained his LORD,—happened in reality long afterwards; but the HOLY SPIRIT has seen fit to exhibit St. Matthew’s Feast and St. Matthew’s Call in close connection,—not only in the present Gospel, but in those of St. Matthew,^(u) and St. Luke^(x) likewise. Concerning which feature of the Divine Method, this is not the right place to speak particularly.

The reader is referred, however, to the note on St. Luke iii. 20.

15 And it came to pass, that, as JESUS sat at meat in his house, many publicans and sinners sat also together with JESUS and His Disciples: for there were many, and they followed Him.

The publicans were there, because St. Matthew himself was a Publican:—St. Matthew x. 3, and St. Luke v. 27.

The expression “Publicans and Sinners” occurs so frequently in the Gospels, that it requires explanation. The “Publicans” were those of the nation who collected the taxes and tribute which had been imposed upon them by their Roman conquerors. Sufficiently hateful in itself, their calling had been rendered doubly infamous by the extortion and dishonesty which the Publicans notoriously practised: whence St. John Baptist, in reply to their inquiry, charged them to “exact no more than that which was appointed them.”^(y) Zaccheus confessed himself guilty in this respect, on a great occasion,—St. Luke xix. 2 and 8.

To be a *publican*, and to be a *sinner*, was therefore regarded as one and the same thing. Compare St. Matthew v. 46, with the parallel places in St. Luke vi. 32: and St. Luke xix. 2 with verse 7. The name became a by-word, and a reproach,

(t) St. Matthew x. 3.
(x) St. Luke v. 28, 29.

(u) St. Matthew ix. 9, 10.
(y) St. Luke iii. 12, 13.

as denoting one of the outcasts of society: see St. Matthew xxiii. 17. Our LORD (doubtless in compliance with the usage of His countrymen,) couples them with "the harlots," in St. Matthew xxi. 31, 32.

But Almighty Goodness saw objects of compassion, and recognized objects of Love, amid the crowd:—calling one of their number, St. Matthew, to be an Apostle; making the humble petition of another, the pattern of justifying prayer: (z) singling out many for condescension, for kindness, and for honour. They were all "the lost sheep" of the House of Israel: and to all such He had been sent. (a) Hence His untiring zeal to seek and to save them. Consider especially the following texts:—St. Luke vii. 36, &c., xi. 37, &c., xv. 1, 2, &c. . . . See the two last notes on the latter part of St. Matthew viii. 10.

16 And when the Scribes and Pharisees saw Him eat with Publicans and Sinners, they said unto His Disciples, How is it that He eateth and drinketh with Publicans and Sinners?

"It was a beautiful emblem of the future," remarks an ancient, "that he who was to be an Apostle and Doctor of the Gentiles, should, on his conversion, draw after him a great multitude of sinners to Salvation,—already performing by his example what he was shortly to perform by his word."

17 When JESUS heard it, He saith unto them, They that are whole have no need of the Physician, but they that are sick:

Our LORD gives them a triumphant answer. Ye say that these are sinners. It is for that very reason that I am found in their company. Were it strange to find a Physician in a Hospital,—or among the sick?

Bede says, strikingly,—“He calls Himself ‘the Physician,’ who, by a strange mode of healing, was wounded for our iniquities; and healed us by His stripes!”

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance.

Either those who are righteous in their own esteem, or those who are really religious,—who already *have* sincerely repented.

It is idle to profess ourselves perplexed by the mention of “just persons,” (b) “the righteous,” (c) and other similar phrases in Holy Scripture. True enough it is that “there is none righteous, no, not one;” (d) but this is said absolutely. *Relatively*, some men are good, and some evil.

Viewed in the Light of an example, our Blessed LORD’s footsteps on this and another occasion (e) had need to be very warily trod in, ere any venture into familiar relations with the outcasts of Society. His voice was powerful “to call Sinners to Repentance;” but *we* had need consider well what rational hope there may be of reclaiming others,—what protection exists against our being dragged into the mire ourselves. Leighton says,—“We must be somewhat hopeful to accomplish, before we attempt such a thing; otherwise, it will prove fool-hardiness to adventure much of this kind.”

18 And the Disciples of John and of the Pharisees used to fast:

The Jewish Church observed two weekly fasts,—on Monday and on Thursday; see St. Luke xviii. 12: and the Pharisees were the “most straitest sect” of the Jewish Religion. (f) St. John we know, “came neither eating nor drinking;” (g) that is, he was a man of most severe and abstemious life; and (as we learn from this place,) enjoined a similar practice on his Disciples. His Ministry was to that of our LORD, what a Vigil is to a Holiday.

And they come and say unto Him, Why do the Disciples of John and of the Pharisees fast, but Thy Disciples fast not?

“Thy Disciples:”—they do not say “*Thou* fastest not.” This should be noticed,—even while we remember St. Matthew xi. 19.

(z) St. Luke xviii. 10 to 14.

(c) 1 St. Peter iv. 18, and here.

(e) St. John iv. 6 to 19.

(a) St. Matthew xv. 24.

(d) Romans iii. 10, quoted from Psalm xiv. 1.

(f) Acts xxvi. 5.

(b) St. Luke xv. 7.

(g) St. Matthew xi. 18.

19 And JESUS said unto them, Can the children of the bridechamber fast, while the Bridegroom is with them?

"Children of the bridechamber," signifies the friends or companions of the Bridegroom: and the term, here, clearly denotes the Disciples of our LORD,—for *they* were His "*friends*."(*h*)

Take notice that these words were addressed to "the disciples of John:"(*i*) to the very men, it may be, who had heard the Baptist speak of our SAVIOUR CHRIST as "*the Bridegroom*" who had "*the Bride*:" while he was himself but "*the friend of the Bridegroom*."(*k*) How impressive must the reply have been by which the Divine Speaker thus claimed the singular relation ascribed to Him by His Forerunner!

How *many* are His names: a Physician, before; (ver. 17;) a Bridegroom, here! . . . He is *everything*, in fact, in turn; and becomes all things to all men. To the unwedded, He is the King of Virgins: to the wedded, the pattern of a most loving Husband. See Ephesians v. 25 to 27 Concerning the title "*Bridegroom*," see St. John iii. 29.

As long as they have the Bridegroom with them, they cannot fast.

"As though He had said,—The present is a time of joy and gladness; sorrow must not then be mixed up with it." "For the showing forth of our SAVIOUR in this World was nothing else but a great marriage Festival; at which our Nature was spiritually united to His, as His Bride,—that she, who was formally barren, might become fruitful." So far, two Ancient Archbishops.

20 But the days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken away from them, and then shall they fast in those days.

As plain a warrant,—if a Scripture warrant is thought necessary,—for the practice of Christian fasting, in these days when "*the Bridegroom*" is taken from us, as a Christian man can require. It is a prophecy,—requiring fulfilment; and finding it, in our obedience to the Church's plain mandate, as contained in our Book of Common Prayer.(*l*) That it was practised by the early Christians, we know from Holy Scripture itself.(*m*)

We learn further from these words of our SAVIOUR, that the Church is now as a *Widow* in His sight.

21 No man also seweth a piece of new cloth on an old garment; else the new piece that filled it up taketh away from the old, and the rent is made worse.

That is,—My Disciples are not yet strong. They have not yet been renewed by the Spirit. They have need therefore of all tenderness and consideration. They could no more endure as yet the reception of a portion of severe new Doctrine, than an old garment can endure the insertion of a piece of cloth which has not passed through the hands of the fuller.—He would not disturb their joy, therefore, by teaching them a piece of austerity which they would not comprehend; nor risk disturbing their ancient prejudices by new and strange precepts.

"The rent is made worse:"—which happened, (as one of the Ancients remarks,) with respect to the Churches of Galatia, when they sought to mix the precepts of Law with those of the Gospel.

22 And no man putteth new wine into old bottles: else the new wine doth burst the bottles, and the wine is spilled, and the bottles will be marred: but new wine must be put into new bottles.

On the first Christian Day of Pentecost, when the Apostles "were all filled with the Holy Ghost," there were found some who mocked, and said "These men are full of new wine."(*n*) Then it was, that *that* was done for the Apostles, which our

(*h*) St. John xv. 15.

(*i*) Compare St. Matthew ix. 14.

(*k*) St. John iii. 29.

(*l*) See the Table of the Vigils, Fasts, and Days of Fasting or Abstinence, to be observed in the Year,—at the end of the Calendar.

(*m*) See Acts xiii. 2, 3; xiv. 23. 1 Cor. vii. 15. See also St. Matthew vi. 17.

(*n*) Acts ii. 13.

Blessed LORD, as a wise "Householder," here explains that He cannot do for them as yet. He quotes a homely precept, full of practical wisdom; namely, that old vessels made of skin, (anciently called "bottles,") will burst, if exposed to the fermentation of newly-made wine. Hence, His unwillingness to burthen His followers with any command which they were not sure of receiving with perfect safety. . . . How many precious hints for guidance,—how much of help,—may we gather from every portion of our Blessed LORD's Discourses!

The Reader is referred to St. Luke v. 39, and the note there. A different incident next comes before us: like the last, as presenting us with the same "contradiction of sinners;" (c) but under a new form.

23 And it came to pass that He went through the corn fields on the Sabbath day; and His Disciples began, as they went, to pluck the ears of corn.

St. Matthew,—xii. 1,—says that the "Disciples were *an hungred*," when they did this. How affecting,—or rather, how instructive a picture is thereby drawn, for the Church's comfort to the end of time! For, was it not the LORD of Heaven and Earth,—the ALMIGHTY GOD—who suffered His followers thus to want; and beheld them satisfying the cravings of hunger, after this humble fashion? He could have furnished forth a banquet for them, at His will; but he willed it not! . . . Surely, then, Poverty must be *better* than Riches; Want, a *better* thing than Abundance.

The act described marks the season of the year,—namely, about the time of the Passover; or of Pentecost, which was "seven weeks from such time as thou beginnest to *put the sickle to the corn*." (p) Reckoning by Passovers, the first year of our LORD's Ministry had therefore now come to an end, when the present incident occurred. See the note on St. Luke vi. 1.

24 And the Pharisees said unto Him, Behold, why do they on the Sabbath day that which is not lawful?

The Pharisees do not accuse the Disciples of *theft*, but of profaning the Sabbath; for the Law, by a merciful provision, expressly allowed their present act:—"When thou comest into the standing corn of thy neighbour, then *thou mayest pluck the ears of corn with thy hand*." (q) It is not easy, however, to see wherein their violation of the fourth Commandment consisted. Was it in the manual labour of "rubbing the ears of corn in their hands,"—as St. Luke describes? (r) Probably not. Nor does any suggestion seem preferable to that of wise Richard Hooker; who was of opinion that the Jewish practice being, to abstain from food on the Sabbath Day, until noon, our LORD's Disciples would have been disregarding the customary fast of the Sabbath by relieving their hunger in the manner here described.

25, 26 And He said unto them, Have ye never read what David did, when he had need, and was an hungred, he, and they that were with him? How

On the Sabbath day,—See Leviticus xxiv. 8, and 1 Chron. ix. 32: so that the cases, so far, were strictly parallel. But, in the case of David, the violation of the letter of the command was far more extraordinary: for,

he went into the House of God.

(By which name, observe, by the way, that our LORD calls *the Tabernacle*. In like manner, it is called *the Temple* in 1 Samuel i. 9 and iii. 3: but the Temple was not built till many years after.)

in the days of Abiathar the High priest,

It is a remarkable thing that our SAVIOUR should say of this transaction, that it occurred "in the days of *Abiathar*, the high-priest,"—rather than of Abimelech, his Father. It is easy to invent an explanation of this; as, by pointing out that the event happened *in the time* of Abiathar,—though not in the time that he was

(c) Hebrews xii. 2.

(p) Deut. xvi. 9.
(r) St. Luke vi. 1.

(q) Deut. xxiii. 25.

actually *high-priest*. But, strange to say, the allusions of the HOLY SPIRIT, whether to the events, or to the precepts of the Old Testament, are almost always surprising, difficult, and even wonderful.

and did eat the shew-bread,

Concerning the shew-bread itself, see Leviticus xxiv. 5 to 9. A stranger might not eat of those twelve cakes of fine flour, "because they are holy;"(s) whence it follows,—

which is not lawful to eat but for the Priests, and gave also to them which were with him?

Our SAVIOUR refers to the well-known history, contained in 1 Samuel xxi. 1 to 9; which describes how David, and certain of his young men, flying from Saul, "came to Nob, to Abimelech the priest,"—and "the priest gave him hallowed bread, for there was no bread there but the shew-bread, that was taken from before the LORD."(t)

27 And He said unto them, The Sabbath was made for man, and not man for the Sabbath:

These words are given only by the present Evangelist; who, as well as St. Luke, (vi. 5,) omits some memorable sayings which our LORD delivered on this occasion,—and which are given by St. Matthew, chap. xii. 5 to 7. The Doctrine laid down in the present verse, seems to be like *that* conveyed by the precept, "I will have mercy and not sacrifice;"(u) which our LORD now also quoted:—namely, that Ceremonial Observances must give place, as often as the higher claims of *Mercy* require. Such an occasion was this,—when, faint and hungry, our LORD's Disciples rubbed out the ears of corn, and ate the grains, for very need. True, indeed, they were neglecting a traditional precept, by so doing: but it argued forgetfulness of the very institution of the Sabbath, to tax them with guilt on that account. Can we suppose that a creature, made in the image of God, should pine with hunger out of superstitious veneration for the Sabbath Day,—which had been originally ordained for *his* sake only: in order that it might be to him a relief, a solace, and a joy?

But these accusers forgot their Bible also. If David, merely because he had need, might—not only eat bread on the Sabbath,—but even eat the very shew-bread itself; dispensing it to his followers: and in the Temple too: how could it be pretended that these suffering men might not eat a handful of dry grains in the open field on the Sabbath Day?

28 Therefore the Son of Man is LORD also of the Sabbath.

The Son of man,—since He *made* the Sabbath,—is *LORD* of it, also. Moreover, since He came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them, He must have power to dispense with the strict observance of this Day, in the letter, as often as it concerned the good of His creatures that He should do so. Here then was One, greater than David,—greater than the Temple,(c)—greater than even the Sabbath itself. And dared they bring to *Him* an accusation, so blind, hollow, and heartless,—against the companions of all His wanderings,—the partners of all His privations and distress?

(s) Exodus xxix. 32.

(u) St. Matthew xii. 7.

(t) 1 Samuel xxi. 6.

(c) St. Matthew xii. 6.

THE PRAYER.

O LORD, who hast taught us that all our doings without Charity are nothing worth; send Thy HOLY GHOST, and pour into our hearts that most excellent gift of Charity, the very bond of Peace and of all virtues without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before Thee: Grant this for Thine Only SON JESUS CHRIST's sake. Amen.

CHAPTER III.

1 CHRIST *healeth the withered hand, 10 and many other infirmities. 11 Rebuketh the unclean Spirits. 13 Chooseth His twelve Apostles. 22 Convinceth the blasphemy of casting out devils by Beelzebub. 31 And sheweth who are His brother, sister, and mother.*

1 AND He entered again into the Synagogue; and there was a man there which had a withered hand.

By "again," in this place, St. Mark means "on another Sabbath,"—see St. Luke vi. 6. The Evangelist is showing how "CHRIST reproved the Pharisees' blindness about the observation of the Sabbath, by Scripture, Reason, and Miracle." (a) The two former proofs are contained in the last few verses (ver. 23 to 28,) of the preceding Chapter. The proof from "Miracle," follows.

2 And they watched Him, whether He would heal him on the Sabbath-day; that they might accuse Him.

What blindness of heart was here! what a benighted conscience! Rather, what hopeless villainy! In the very house of God,—on a miserable pretence of excessive jealousy for *His* honour,—here are Scribes and Pharisees devising nothing less than the Destruction of their mighty Countryman. They knew His merciful disposition. They have learnt, by experience, that He never beholds misery without seeking to relieve it. They therefore lay wait for Him; and watch, to see what He will do with respect to a poor sufferer, who sits before Him with a withered hand. Will He venture to overstep the letter of their own vile tradition; and so far incur the charge of *working* on the Sabbath day, as to perform an act of *healing* upon it? At last, they call His attention to the man's case, by the question,—"*Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?*" (b)

Take notice, that the purpose with which they watched Him,—as well as that with which they put their inquiry,—was, that they may find a ground of accusation against Him; and so, bring Him within the penalty of the Law, which required the *Death* of every offender." (c)

It is with reference to this, *their secret purpose*, that the Evangelist St. Luke adds,—"*But he knew their thought.*" (d) And further, it will be observed that it was with reference to this, their murderous design, that our SAVIOUR spoke the words recorded in ver. 4.

3 And He saith unto the man which had the withered hand, Stand forth.

Or, as it is in St. Luke, "Rise up, and stand forth in the midst:" upon which the same Evangelist is careful to add,—"*And he arose and stood forth.*" By this means, it will be perceived that our SAVIOUR called marked attention to the Miracle which He was about to perform.

4 And He saith unto them, Is it lawful to do good on the Sabbath-days, or to do evil? to save life, or to kill?

(a) See the heading of St. Luke vi.: and compare the heading of St. Matthew xii.

(b) St. Matt. xii. 10.

(c) Exodus xxxi. 15.

(d) St. Luke vi. 8.

As if He had said,—*You* ask, “Is it lawful to heal on the Sabbath-days?”(c)—“*I* [also] will ask you one thing?”(f) “Is it lawful to *do good* on the Sabbath-days,”(g)—as, for example, to this afflicted being, whose sad state moves *My* compassion:—“or,” is it rather right “to *do evil* ;”—to such an one as *Myself*, for example, against whom *you* entertain murderous thoughts? “To *save* life,”—with which object *I* am come into the World;(h) “or to *destroy* it,”(i)—which is just now all *your* purpose? . . . What a withering question! We seem to feel that it admitted of no reply: accordingly, the Evangelist adds,—

But they held their peace.

St. Mark alone it is who notices this striking circumstance.

St. Matthew will be found to have preserved another memorable saying which our LORD proceeded to deliver on this occasion: see chap. xii. 11, 12, of his Gospel,—and the notes there.

5 And when He had looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts,

This statement, also, is peculiar to the present Gospel. See the first notes on St. Mark i.

The human feelings of “grief” and “anger” are here ascribed to the Son of Man. The very next words attest His glorious Godhead. Consider the many places in the Gospels, where we are presented with the same wondrous proofs that He was “very God and very Man:” as, when He “wept” before the raising of Lazarus;(k) and “slept,” before He stilled the storm.(l) See the notes on St. Matthew viii. 10: St. Mark vii. 34; St. Luke iv. 30, vii. 13, and viii. 23.

He saith unto the man, Stretch forth thine hand. And he stretched it out.

It was his *right* hand, as St. Luke relates;(m) that hand which had been stretched out “in the beginning” to pluck the fruit of the forbidden tree!

“Until the coming of the SAVIOUR, there was a withered hand in the Synagogue of the Jews; for the works of the LORD were not done in it. But when He came upon Earth, the right hand was restored, in the Apostles who believed; and given back to its former occupation.” . . . How do the ancients delight in such remarks! as if not only exclaiming at all times with the Psalmist, “Thy thoughts are very deep:”(n) but seeking to fathom them also. . . . “Well is this withered hand said to have been in the Synagogue,” says another: “for where the gift of knowledge is greater, the danger of an abuse of knowledge is greater also.”

and his hand was restored whole as the other.

Take notice, that this was one of the cases when our LORD may be said to have wrought a miracle of healing, *without a word*. Unlike the occasion when He “*made clay*,” and “anointed the eyes of the blind man:”(o)—unlike those cases, even, when He went to the house of the sufferer, and laid His hands upon him:—the present miracle followed upon the exercise of a mere act of Almighty Will. Our SAVIOUR did but direct the man to assume a posture which should bring his withered limb under the distinct observation of all present; and thus make the miracle which followed, a plain and palpable thing. . . . How must their anger have been thereby aroused and inflamed! The man was healed: yet our LORD had *done* nothing: *less*, certainly, than each one of themselves was forced to do at every hour, throughout the Sabbath.

St. Luke here adds a most remarkable statement,—namely, that “they were filled with madness: and communed one with another what they might do to Jesus.”(p)

(c) St. Matthew xii. 10.

(f) St. Luke vi. 9.

(g) Our LORD Himself answers the question in St. Matt. xii. 12.

(h) St. Luke ix. 56. St. John xii. 47.

(i) St. Luke vi. 9.

(k) St. John xi. 35.

(l) St. Mark iv. 38.

(m) St. Luke vi. 6.

(n) Psalm xcii. 5.

(o) St. John ix. 6 and 11.

(p) St. Luke vi. 11.

6 And the Pharisees went forth, and straightway took counsel with the Herodians against Him, how they might destroy Him.

And this should convince us that it is not *greater Light*, but a *change of heart* which is required, so often as the appeals of Religion are made to mankind in vain. "If they hear not Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."(*g*) See below, on verse 22.

"The Herodians" are mentioned only twice in the Gospels: here, and in St. Mark xii. 13: (which is the same occasion as St. Matthew xxii. 16.) From their name, (which implies that they were courtiers or adherents of King Herod,) it may be supposed that they were rather a political party, than a religious sect. Nothing, however, is known about them.

7 But JESUS withdrew Himself with His disciples to the Sea:

Setting thereby an example of the precept which He afterwards delivered to His Disciples:—namely, "When they persecute in this city, flee ye into another."(*r*) This our LORD often exemplified by His practice,—as, when He fled to Capernaum from Nazareth:(*s*) and to Bethabara, and Ephraim, from Jerusalem.(*t*)

8 and a great multitude from Galilee followed Him, and from Judæa, and from Jerusalem, and from Idumæa, and *from* beyond Jordan; and they about Tyre and Sidon, a great multitude, when they had heard what great things He did, came unto Him.

This description comprehends the whole district to which we commonly give the name of the Holy Land,—Samaria only excepted. Judæa and Jerusalem occupy the centre: Galilee, and the district of Tyre and Sidon, comprehend the country West and North of the Jordan: "beyond Jordan,"—(that is "Peræa,")—and Idumæa, describe all that lies on the East and South.

This is the only place in the New Testament where Idumæa is mentioned.(*u*) It is the name of the country south of Palestine, which was occupied by the descendants of Esau, otherwise called "Edom,"(*x*)—from whence comes *Idumæa*. See the note on St. Matthew ii. 3.

9, 10 And He spake to His Disciples, that a small ship should wait on Him because of the multitude, lest they should throng Him. For He had healed many; insomuch that they pressed upon Him for to touch Him, as many as had plagues.

One of the ancients remarks,—“He entered a boat, who could have crossed the Sea on foot; for He would not be always working miracles, lest men should lose sight of the reality of His Incarnation.”

11 And unclean Spirits, when they saw Him, fell down before Him, and cried, saying, Thou art the SON of GOD.

The SON of God" implies the MESSIAH,—the long promised Deliverer of the Nation; foretold in Prophecy,—foreshadowed in History. The Jews had learnt,—probably from Psalm ii. 7, 12: (compare Acts xiii. 33. Heb. i. 5: v. 5,)—by that name to speak of CHRIST; as we learn from St. Matthew xiv. 33: xvi. 16: xxvi. 63: xxvii. 54. Luke xxii. 70. St. John i. 49: ix. 35: xi. 27, &c. The very fallen Angels knew MESSIAH by that Name,—as we learn from this place, and from St. Matthew viii. 29. St. Luke iv. 41, &c. The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Luke iv. 34.

12 And He straitly charged them that they should not make Him known.

(*g*) St. Luke xvi. 31.

(*s*) St. Luke iv. 30, 31.

(*u*) The name is found in the following place of the Old Testament: Isaiah xxxiv. 5, 6: Ezekiel xxxv. 15: xxxvi. 5.

(*x*) Genesis xxxvi. 1, 8.

(*r*) St. Matt. x. 23.

(*t*) St. John x. 40: xi. 54.

See the notes on St. Mark i. 44 and 45: also the first note on St. Matthew viii. 4. Compare also St. Matthew ix. 30, and the note on 31.

13 And He goeth up into a Mountain, and calleth unto Him whom He would: and they came unto Him.

This was the occasion when our Lord delivered the Sermon on the Mount. See below, the note on ver. 19: and compare St. Luke vi. 13.

14 And He ordained Twelve,

He ordained Twelve Apostles, answering to the twelve sons of Jacob, to be the heads of the spiritual Israel, the "Israel of God,"—as it is said in Galatians vi. 16. Whence that remarkable saying in St. Matthew xix. 28: with which compare Rev. vii. 4 to 8: xxi. 12 and 14. Consider also Rev. iv. 4.

This was done after continuing "all night in prayer to God!" See St. Luke vi. 12, and the note there. St. Mark goes on to declare the purpose with which the Twelve were ordained.

15 that they should be with Him, and that He might send them forth to preach, and to have power to heal sicknesses, and to cast out devils.

The names of the Apostles follow,—verse 16 to 19. There are three other places where the Twelve are enumerated: namely, St. Matthew x. 2 to 4,—St. Luke vi. 14 to 16,—Acts i. 13.

16 And Simon He surnamed Peter;

"Peter" in Greek, "Cephas" in Syriac, signifies *Rock*. "For" (to quote the words of our countryman Bede,) "as CHRIST was the True Light, and yet allowed that the Apostles should be called the Light of the World,(y)—so also to Simon, who believed on CHRIST the Rock,(z) He gave the name of Rock."

Simon,—the son of Jonas,(a) and brother of Andrew,—is always mentioned first of the Twelve;(b) and the voice of the Church has assigned to him a *priority of rank*, while it has denied him any *authority*, over the rest of the Apostles. Indeed, that he had none, can be proved from Scripture itself.(c) He was not surnamed "Peter," (or rather "Cephas,") on the present occasion; but at his first interview with CHRIST,(d) and again, after his glorious confession of our Lord's Divinity.(e) He is twice called *Symeon*: once by St. James,—our Lord's cousin;(f) once by himself, at the beginning of his Second Epistle,—2 St. Peter i. 1. Like Andrew, he was born at Bethsaida,(g) but lived at Capernaum,(h) where he exercised the calling of a fisherman. See the notes on St. Matthew iv. 18, and viii. 14. He alone of the Twelve is *certainly* known to have been a married man:(i) though many of the rest were probably married. See 1 Cor. ix. 5; and the note on St. Matthew viii. 14.

He is perhaps the most famous of all the Apostles, having been singled out in an especial manner by his Divine Master on many occasions of great solemnity and importance. With St. John, St. James, and St. Andrew, he heard our SAVIOUR predict the Fall of Jerusalem, and the signs of His own Coming:(k) with the two first of those Apostles, he was the chosen witness of the raising of Jairus' daughter:(l) of the Transfiguration:(m) and of the Agony in the Garden.(n) With the first named, he prepared the Paschal Supper.(o) On him alone, our Blessed SAVIOUR promised to build His Church:(p) with him, was content to pay tribute:(q) to him, vouchsafed an appearance after His Resurrection:(r) and finally, command-

(y) St. Matth. v. 14.

(z) 1 Cor. x. 4.

(a) St. John i. 42, and xxi. 15, 16, 17. St. Matth. xvi. 17.

(b) St. Matth. x. 2; St. Mark iii. 16; St. Luke vi. 14; Acts i. 13.

(c) Consider Acts viii. 14: xv. 6 to 21. Galatians ii. 11 to 14.

(d) St. John i. 42.

(e) St. Matth. xvi. 8.

(f) Acts xv. 14.

(g) St. John i. 44.

(h) St. Mark i. 29.

(i) St. Mark i. 30; 1 Cor. ix. 5.

(k) St. Mark xiii. 3.

(l) St. Mark v. 37.

(m) St. Matth. xvii. 1.

(n) St. Matth. xxvi. 37 and 40.

(o) St. Luke xxii. 8.

(p) St. Matth. xvi. 18.

(q) St. Matth. xvii. 24 to 26.

(r) St. Luke xxiv. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 5.

ed him earnestly to feed His flock,(s)—prophesying to him at the same time the manner of his death.(t) He walked upon the water to come to CHRIST:(u) seems to have supplied his Divine Master with a home:(x) at the first miraculous draught of fishes, was called to his Apostleship:(y) at the second, drew the net to land, himself.(z) He is always conspicuous, always foremost:(a) when hearts are failing:(b) at the prospect of danger:(c) during the last Supper:(d) in the Garden:(e) in the Judgment-hall:(f) at the Grave:(g) at the Lake.(h) By virtue of the prayers of his Divine Master,(i) he was saved from the dominion of the Enemy: but his threefold denial of his LORD remains for our eternal warning. “Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth, take heed lest he fall.”(k)

17 And James the son of Zebedee, and John the brother of James;

The two sons of Zebedee, (and probably Salome,)(l) we beheld called to their Apostleship at the same time as St. Peter and St. Andrew. They are mentioned in connection with those two saints on one great occasion; and in connection with St. Peter alone, on three; as was shown in the preceding note. Their names are found united twice in a remarkable manner,—namely, in St. Luke ix. 54, and St. Mark x. 35, 37: and they were both present at the concluding scene of St. John's Gospel.(m) Of St. James,—the elder brother,—we know little except that he was the first of the Apostolic body to suffer martyrdom: the *only* one of the Twelve, (save the son of Perdition,) whose death is actually recorded in the Bible.”(n)

St. John yields, perhaps, to St. Peter the foremost place in the Apostolic Body; but he is second to none of the Twelve in his claims on the Love and Veneration of the Church. This was “the Disciple whom JESUS loved; which also leaned on His breast at supper, and said, LORD, which is he that betrayeth Thee?”(o)—This was he who when Simon Peter had denied his LORD, and all the other Disciples had forsaken Him and fled, alone remained faithful to Him: stood beside His Cross: received from His dying lips the most precious Legacy which Love ever bequeathed, the care namely of the Virgin Mother herself:(p) and still lingered on, when “it was finished,” to see and bear witness to the Miracle which the LORD's lifeless body yet displayed.(q)—Lastly, this was he who “was in the Isle that is called Patmos, for the Word of God, and for the Testimony of JESUS CHRIST;” and “was in the Spirit on the LORD's Day:” and was shown the things which shall be hereafter:(r)—even by CHRIST himself! He was no less the Apostle of Zeal than of Love. Consider St. Luke ix. 49 and 54: Acts iv. 13, 19; and see the next note.

Besides his Gospel, and the Book of Revelation, St. John left to the Church three Epistles: so that, next to St. Paul, he is the largest contributor to the Gospel Treasury. Having “tarried till the LORD came,”(s) and outlived all the rest of the Apostles, he died at a great age, (it is thought) in Asia Minor. He never mentions himself by name; but he sometimes calls himself “the Disciple whom JESUS loved;”(t) sometimes “the other Disciple.”(u)

By this last expression he marks his close friendship with Simon Peter:(x) for these two Apostles became so conspicuous after the Ascension of our LORD, that when St. Peter had been named, it was understood that “the *other* Disciple” could mean no one but St. John. So much does he dwell in his Writings on the Divinity of his LORD and ours, that he obtained among the Brethren the title of “The Divine.”

and He surnamed them Boanerges, which is, The Sons of Thunder :

(s) St. John xxi. 15, 16, 17.

(u) St. Matth. xiv. 28 to 31.

(y) St. Luke v. 10.

(a) St. Matth. xvii. 4; xviii. 21: xix. 27. St. Luke v. 8: viii. 45: xii. 41.

(b) St. John vi. 66 to 68.

(c) St. Matth. xvi. 22: xxvi. 33 and 35. St. John xviii. 10.

(d) St. John xiii. 6 to 9: also 24: also 36, 37.

(f) St. John xviii. 15, 16.

(h) St. John xxi. 3.

(l) Compare St. Matth. xxvii. 56, with St. Mark xv. 40.

(n) Acts xii. 2.

(q) St. John xix. 34, 35.

(t) See St. John xiii. 23: xix. 26: xx. 2: xxi. 7, 20.

(u) As in St. John xviii. 15: xx. 2, 3, 4 and 8.

(x) Consider St. Luke xxii. 8. St. John xx. 2: xxi. 20, 21. Acts iii. 1: iv. 13: viii. 14.

(t) St. John xxi. 18, 19.

(x) St. Mark i. 29. St. Luke iv. 38.

(z) St. John xxi. 11.

(p) St. John xxi. 22, 23.

(e) St. John xviii. 10.

(g) St. Luke xxiv. 12. St. John xx. 2 to 19.

(k) 1 Cor. x. 12.

(m) St. John xxi. 2.

(p) St. John xix. 26, 27.

(s) St. John xxi. 22, 23.

Very grateful should we be for this explanation of a name, which, unaided, we should not have been able to understand. *Bouu-erges* was probably the Galilean pronunciation of two Hebrew words, which mean literally *Sons of Shaking*: but the *SMITH* here informs us that the violent trembling, commotion, or shaking thereby implied, is *that* to which we give the name of *Thunder*.

The remarkable title thus bestowed on Zebedee's two sons, seems to contain an allusion to those words of Haggai,—“Yet once, it is a little while, I will *shake* the Heavens, and the Earth, and the Sea, and the dry Land; and I will *shake* all nations.”(y) St. Paul applies that prophecy to the preaching of the Gospel;(z) and it seems to be meant by our Lord, when He called St. James and St. John *Bouuerges*, that those Brothers were destined to prove eminent instruments in the mighty work of the Gospel: that, like *Thunder*, their inspired preaching was to bear down all opposition,—to shake the nations, and to change the very aspect of Society.

That a wondrous destiny awaited them, the special favour which, together with St. Peter, they enjoyed,—may have well convinced them: and they seem to have been conscious of this, when, on one occasion, they asked leave to call down fire from Heaven;(a) and when, on another, they requested for themselves the two places of greatest Glory in the future Kingdom of their Lord.(b)

18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew,

Andrew, first of all the Apostolic body, is mentioned by name as coming at the knowledge of Christ.(c) Philip was called fifth; and Bartholomew, sixth.(d) The last-named was of Cana in Galilee;(e) and is doubtless the same Apostle whom St. John calls *Nathanael*: though the Church has not sanctioned the opinion by appointing any part of St. John i. to be read on his Festival. He is mentioned with high praise in St. John i. 45 to 51; and is found to have witnessed the great miracle described in the concluding Chapter of the same Gospel,—xxi. 2. His name means “Son of Tolmi.”

“Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew:”—the names come together, not without a fitness and a reason. Philip was of Bethsaida,—the city of Andrew and Peter;(f) and he was Andrew's special friend. See St. John vi. 5 and 8: xii. 21 and 22. Andrew and he are doubtless the “two other Disciples” spoken of in St. John xxi. 2. Philip was the means of bringing Bartholomew to Christ; and the two disciples are found, ever after, linked together,—as was remarked in the note on St. John i. 49. He is mentioned on one memorable occasion only, besides the two above indicated,—namely, in St. John xiv. 8, 9: and in connection with which see the note on St. John i. 45.

and Matthew,

Otherwise called Levi,(g) His Father's name was Alphæus.(h) In his own Gospel, St. Matthew alone calls himself “the Publican,” and humbly names himself *after* St. Thomas.(i) His summons to follow the footsteps of our Lord, as he sat “at the receipt of custom” in Capernaum, (which city was doubtless his home,) is related by all the three Evangelists in immediate connection with the Feast which he made long after to his Divine Master: but(k) he is mentioned nowhere else in the Gospels.

and Thomas,

The “Holy Apostle,” who, “for the more confirmation of the Faith” was suffered by God to be doubtful in His Son's Resurrection,(l) is seldom mentioned in the Gospels; yet sufficiently often to enable us to form a distinct notion of his character. See the note on St. John xi. 16. He asks a question, in St. John xiv. 5;—obtains memorable notice in St. John xx. 24 to 29;—and was one of the seven who

(y) Haggai ii. 6, 7.

(h) St. Mark x. 35 to 37.

(c) St. John xxi. 2.

(d) St. Mark ii. 14.

(e) See St. Matth. ix. 9, 10: St. Mark ii. 13, 14, 15: St. Luke v. 27, 28, 29.

(f) See the Collect for his Festival; and compare St. John xx. 24, &c.

(z) Hebrews xii. 26.

(a) St. John i. 41.

(b) St. John i. 44: xii. 21.

(c) St. Matthew x. 3.

(n) St. Luke ix. 54.

(d) St. John i. 43 and 45, &c.

(g) St. Luke v. 27, 29.

witnessed the miracle described in St. John xxi. 2. His surname was "Didymus;" (*m*) which signifies in Greek, (as "Thomas" signifies in Hebrew,)—*Twin*.

and James the son of Alphæus,

So called in order to distinguish him from James the son of Zebedee, mentioned above. He was probably a distinct person from "James, the Lord's Brother;" (*n*) that is, His *Cousin*, the son of Cleophas, (*o*) and author of the Epistle, and first Bishop of Jerusalem. Learned men have indeed thought that Cleophas and Alphæus are *the same name*; and certainly, if this be the "James the less" mentioned in St. Mark xv. 40, they must be right. But the suggestion does not seem probable. See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 55. The festival of this Apostle is kept with that of St. Philip, on May 1st. Nothing is recorded concerning him in the Gospels.

and Thaddæus,

Called by St. Matthew, "Lebbæus, whose surname was Thaddæus;" (*p*) and the same person whom St. Luke, in two places, calls "Judas the brother of James;" (*q*) that is, of James, Bishop of Jerusalem. Indeed, he so styles himself in a certain place. (*r*) He was one of our Lord's "Brethren," and the Author of the Epistle which bears his name, (St. Jude,)—as was said in the note on St. Matthew xiii. 55. Once only in the Gospels is any act or saying of his recorded,—namely in St. John xiv. 22. See the next note.

and Simon the Canaanite,

Not "the *Canaanite*," (be sure!) but "the *Cananite*." The mistake (in the Latin Translation of St. Matthew's Gospel, x. 4,) is probably more than 1700 years old; and has been suffered by our excellent Translators to stand. By St. Luke, Simon is called "Zelotes;" (*s*) Some such appellation was required to distinguish him from the other Simons, (they are six in all,) mentioned in the Gospels. And take note that both names have one and the same meaning. *Cananite*, in Hebrew,—*Zelotes*, in Greek,—alike imply the *Zealot*; and indicate one who has an earnest zeal for the Law, like "Saul of Tarsus."

Nothing is known of this holy man,—whose Festival, together with that of "St. Jude," the Church observes on one and the same day: October 28th. The names of the two come together in all the four lists of the Apostles.

19 and Judas Iscariot, which also betrayed Him:

And for whom "it had been good if he had not been born;" (*t*) His history is too well remembered to make any references to it necessary; but it is not enough *thought about* by men. The Traitor's surname, "Iscariot," (by which he is distinguished from the other Judas, spoken of above; and to which St. John adds "son of Simon,") (*u*) is supposed to have been derived from Kerieth,—a city mentioned in Joshua xv. 25, Jeremiah xlviii. 24 and 41, and Amos ii. 2.—St. Matthias fills his throne, and wears his crown. (*x*)

When the Disciples were sent out "by two and two," (*y*) his companion will have been either (*z*) Simon "called Zelotes," (*a*) that is, *the Zealot*; (*b*) or (*c*) it will have been his namesake, our Lord's own cousin,—mentioned in the former note.

And thus much, or rather thus little, concerning the twelve most famous names in the annals of the World's History. Of the men themselves, we know next to nothing. Their lives are "hid with CHRIST in God;" (*d*)

Take notice, Reader, that the Sermon on the Mount, and our Lord's second ministerial Journey,—together with many other mighty instances,—occur in this place. It is with reference to an event which happened at the end of many months, that is here added:

(*m*) St. John xi. 16 and xxi. 2. (*n*) Galat. i. 19.

(*o*) Compare St. Mark xv. 40, with St. John xix. 25.

(*q*) St. Luke vi. 16, and Acts i. 13.

(*s*) See St. Luke vi. 15, and Acts i. 13.

(*u*) St. John vi. 71: xii. 4; xiii. 2, 26.

(*y*) St. Mark vi. 7.

(*b*) See the former note.

(*z*) Consider St. Matthew x. 4.

(*c*) Consider St. Luke vi. 16.

(*p*) St. Matthew x. 3.

(*r*) St. Jude i.

(*t*) St. Matthew xxvi. 24.

(*x*) Rev. iv. 4, 10.

(*a*) St. Luke vi. 15.

(*d*) Colos. iii. 3.

20, 21 And they went into an house. And the multitude cometh together again, so that they could not so much as eat bread. And when His friends heard of it, they went out to lay hold on Him: for they said, He is beside Himself.

How remarkable a statement! It seems to point out labours so arduous, a course of conduct so unexpected and extraordinary,—that a disordered mind furnished the readiest clue to what men beheld.

Take notice, that “His Friends,” in this place denotes “His Brethren and His Mother,” whose arrival is mentioned in verse 31.

22 And the Scribes which came down from Jerusalem said, He hath Beelzebub, and by the Prince of the Devils casteth He out devils.

St. Mark omits the miracle which was the occasion of this blasphemy, but St. Matthew,—chap. xii. 22, 23, and St. Luke,—chap. xi. 14, supply it.

And this may be a fit place for saying a few words concerning “the Scribes;” concerning whom, we read so much in the Gospels.

The name denotes a “Writer:” but in the time of our Lord, this name belonged to those persons who, by profession, were learned in the Holy Scriptures; (sometimes called, *The Law*;) and who made it their business to expound the Sacred Writings to the people. King Herod, in the hour of difficulty, is accordingly found to have demanded of “the Chief Priests and Scribes of the people,” “Where Christ should be born?” (c) From their knowledge of the Mosaic Law, the Scribes were sometimes called *Lawyers*,—as appears by a comparison of St. Matthew xxii. 35 with St. Mark xii. 28: see however the note on St. Luke xi. 45. Sometimes, they were called *Doctors of the Law*,—as appears by a comparison of St. Matthew ix. 3 with St. Luke v. 17. They seem to have been mostly of the sect of the Pharisees. See St. Matt. xxiii. 2, 13, 14, 15, &c. Also Acts xxiii. 9; and compare St. Luke xi. 44, 45.

It is difficult to realize the hardness of heart, which, in persons so instructed, could resist this overwhelming evidence of the presence of God among them. The present was their last resource;—to ascribe to the Powers of Darkness, acts of Deity the reality of which it was impossible to deny. See the note on St. Matthew xii. 24.

Surely these things were written for our learning. They should convince us that to begin the study of Religion with books “on the Evidences,” (as they are called,) is to begin at the wrong end. They almost show the worthlessness of such Books, as instruments of conviction, altogether. “He that cometh to God, must believe,”—must begin by believing,—“that He is.” (f) Accordingly, the Epistles are all addressed to *Believers*. Consider especially 1 St. John v. 13. “The Scribes” of whom St. Mark here writes, were the most learned of the nation “in the Jews’ Religion:” and they beheld with their eyes,—they had the evidence of all their senses,—that stupendous Miracles were really wrought. Both the Testimony of others, and their own Experience assured them of the Truth. Our Lord Himself many a time convinced them by Scripture: on this occasion, He does it by Reason. But His mighty Discourse is more fully given by St. Matthew, xii. 25 to 45, (where see the notes;) and St. Luke xi. 17 to 26.

See above, the note on ver. 6.

23, 24, 25, 26 And He called them unto Him, and said unto them in parables, How can Satan cast out Satan? And if a Kingdom be divided against itself, that Kingdom cannot stand. And if a House be divided against itself, that House cannot stand. And if Satan rise up against himself, and be divided, he cannot stand, but hath an end.

This argument admitted of no answer from them: and blessed be God for the practical warning which it contains to ourselves! Neither Kingdom, nor City, (g) nor House,—(no, nor yet Church,) (h)—can stand, if it be divided against itself. See the note on St. Matthew xii. 26. Our Saviour could not therefore, from the very nature of the case, have been in league with the power of which He was the

(c) St. Matt. ii. 4.

(f) Hebrews xi. 6.

(g) St. Matth. xii. 25.

(h) See the “prayer for Unity,” in the Form of Prayer for the 20th of June.

professed and open Enemy. So far was this from being possible, that, (as our Lord proceeds to say,)—

27 No man can enter into a Strong Man's house, and spoil his goods, except he will first bind the Strong Man; and then he will spoil his house.

By which words, our Lord went on to show that He must needs, on the contrary, have already *overcome* Satan. The Devil must have been first *bound* by Him who now casts him out. See the argument as St. Luke magnificently states it,—chap. xi. 21, 22: and take notice, that Satan is “the Strong Man” here spoken of: whose “House” or “Palace,” was this lower World; and especially the bodies of the rational creatures who inhabit it.⁽ⁱ⁾ *CHRIST is the Stronger than the Strong*, who first bound the Tempter; when He rejected all his Temptations. See the long note at the beginning of St. Matthew iv.—The Reader is also referred to the notes on St. Luke iv. 6.

“*Then He will spoil his house:*”—what wonders of the invisible world seem to be here hinted at! . . . See the note on St. Luke xi. 22: also on St. Matthew xiii. 29.

Our Lord proceeds to caution His assailants against the danger which they incurred by *calling Him Beelzebub*. See St. Matthew x. 25.

28 Verily I say unto you, All sins shall be forgiven unto the sons of men, and blasphemies wherewith soever they shall blaspheme:

A most gracious and merciful assurance truly: for it is more than a declaration that Almighty God “desireth not the death of a sinner, but rather that he may turn from his wickedness and live.”^(k) It is a promise also, that free Pardon shall follow upon sincere Repentance: that the Gate of Mercy shall be *never* closed against him who knocketh.

St. Matthew adds here,—“And whosoever speaketh a word against the Son of Man it shall be forgiven him.”^(l) After which, both Evangelists proceed to describe the unpardonable sin.

29, 30 but he that shall blaspheme against the HOLY GHOST hath never forgiveness, but is in danger of eternal damnation: (because they said, He hath an unclean spirit.)

What then is the nature of that unpardonable offence, concerning which our Lord says such awful things? We are rather disposed to pray that we may never incur it, than to set about explaining it. It is clearly much more than wilful sin. It seems rather to be the terrible act of one like Judas, who, in defiance of Light and Knowledge, rejects of set purpose,—opposes, after due deliberation,—the Grace of the HOLY SPIRIT. It is Blindness, not only chosen, but persevered in to the end: denial, not only hazarded, but maintained to the very last, against the strong cry of conscience. Well may such a state exclude from Pardon! There is no room left for it. Prayer is put away. Repentance is refused. It is the “*sin unto death*” spoken of by the beloved disciple.^(m) See the note on the last half of St. Luke xi. 26. See also the notes on St. Matthew xii. 32. Observe however that while there is life, none may be judged in this matter: for who are *we* to despair of those whom the Patience and the Goodness of God leads to Repentance?⁽ⁿ⁾

One of the ancients thus interprets the place:—“Whoso speaketh a word against the Son of Man, as stumbling at My flesh, and thinking of Me as no more than man, may yet find pardon. But whoso, plainly perceiving the Works of God, and unable to deny the Power of God, yet speaks falsely against those works, prompted by jealousy; calling *CHRIST*, (who is the Word of God,) and the works of the HOLY GHOST,—Beelzebub; *he* shall have no forgiveness, neither in this World, nor in the World to come.”

31 There came then His Brethren and His Mother, and, standing without, sent unto Him, calling Him.

(i) Compare St. Matth. xii. 44.

(k) Compare the Daily Absolution, with Ezekiel xxxiii. 11: xviii. 23, 31, 32.

(l) St. Matthew xii. 32. (m) 1 St. John v. 16.

(n) Compare Romans ii. 4 and 2 St. Peter iii. 9.

The "Brethren" of our LORD,—whose names, (James, Joses, Simon, Judas,) are given in St. Matthew xiii. 55, and St. Mark vi. 3,—were the sons of Cleophas, and Mary, the sister and namesake of the Blessed Virgin. See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 55; also on St. Matthew xii. 47.

The Reader is referred back to the conclusion of the note on verse 21.

32, 33, 34, 35 And the multitude sat about Him; and they said unto Him, Behold, Thy Mother and Thy Brethren without seek for Thee. And He answered them, saying, Who is My Mother, or My Brethren? And He looked round about on them which sat about Him, and said, Behold My Mother, and My Brethren! For whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My Brother, and My Sister, and Mother.

Three ancient Bishops,—one Eastern, the other two, of the West,—concur in the remark that he who preaches the SAVIOUR is, in a manner, His Parent: for he produces Him in the heart of his hearers. Both, perhaps, derived the idea from the same place of Scripture: namely, Galatians iv. 19,—with which compare 1 Cor. iv. 15, and Philemon 10.—Consider 1 St. Peter i. 23: ii. 2.

Our LORD repeated the saying here recorded on another occasion,—St. Luke viii. 21; where see the note. See also the concluding note on St. Matthew xii. "Verily, spiritual Regeneration bringeth man into a more honourable relation to CHRIST, than natural generation ever did."

THE PRAYER.

ALMIGHTY GOD, who hast given us Thy only-begotten SON to take our nature upon Him, and as at this time to be born of a pure Virgin; grant that we being regenerate, and made Thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by Thy HOLY SPIRIT; through the same our LORD JESUS CHRIST, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the same SPIRIT, ever one GOD, world without end. Amen.

CHAPTER IV.

1 *The parable of the Sower, 14 and the meaning thereof.* 21 *We must communicate the light of our knowledge to others.* 26 *The parable of the Seed growing secretly,* 30 *and of the Mustard seed.* 35 *CHRIST stilleth the Tempest on the sea.*

1 AND He began again to teach by the sea side: and there was gathered unto Him a great multitude, so that He entered into a ship, and sat in the sea; and the whole multitude was by the sea on the land.

The Sower enters into a ship,—in order the better thence to sow His seed.

Those who have visited the Sea of Galilee, describe it as a beautiful sheet of clear water,—encircled by grey hills. See the note on St. Mark i. 16. We are to pic-

ture the Divine Speaker,—attended by His Apostles,—seated in a Boat upon this Lake, at a little distance from the shore. Along the water's edge, a vast multitude of persons “out of every city”(a) are standing, attentive to the wondrous discourse of Him who spoke as none had ever before spoken. See the last note on St. Matthew vii. On the relative position of our SAVIOUR and His auditory, an old writer remarks:—“The Evangelist did not relate this without a purpose, but that he might show the Lord's will therein; who desired so to place the people that He might have none behind Him, but that all should be before His face.”

2 And He taught them many things by Parables, and said unto them in His doctrine,

The Reader is referred to a note on St. Matthew xiii. 3, concerning the teaching by Parables, in general, and concerning this particular Parable.

Hearken;

This summons to attention, is peculiar to St. Mark's Gospel.

3 Behold, there went out a Sower to sow:

These words, which introduce the Parable of the Sower, will be found interpreted by the Divine Speaker Himself, in ver. 14,—where see the note. Observe only, by the way, at the outset, how the Heavenly Husbandman, after surveying every part of His Creation, is found for the most part to make choice of those images which have reference to Husbandry: sheep, and goats, and shepherds; barn, and fan, and threshing-floor; wheat, and chaff, and tares; fig-trees, vineyards, and corn-fields; ploughers, sowers, and reapers. . . . Surely it was done in order that these very objects, daily seen, might enable us to keep His blessed Teaching in daily remembrance!

See more in the note on the first part of St. Luke viii. 5.

4 And it came to pass, as He sowed, some fell by the way side, and the fowls of the air came and devoured it up.

Here then is the first comparison:—a heart, common as the *high-way*: hardened by the constant passing to and fro of worldly thoughts. See the note on ver. 15.

The soil “by the wayside” is hard and unbroken; wholly unfit, therefore, to receive the seed. The plough must first open the furrows. And yet, take notice, that this is not *all* the evil. There is danger from without, also. “The fowls of the air” are on the watch to carry away the seed, as soon as it has fallen.

See more in the note on the latter part of St. Luke viii. 5.

5, 6 And some fell on stony ground, where it had not much earth; and immediately it sprang up, because it had no depth of earth. But when the sun was up, it was scorched; and because it had no root, it withered away.

“*Stony ground*,”—or, as St. Luke expresses it(b) “*a rock*”—furnishes the next resemblance. Not, observe, a hard hopeless surface,—on which it would have been mere mockery to cast the seed. There *is* earth,—but it has no *depth*, and consequently no *moisture*(c)

“*Stony*,” or, as it should rather be translated, “*rocky ground*,” does not of course mean such a soil as abounds in many parts of England,—where the stones are covered with about three inches of earth, and where the corn is found to grow plentifully. A soil is supposed, consisting of the live rock; into which the roots of the corn cannot insinuate themselves.

See more in the note on St. Luke viii. 6.

7 And some fell among thorns, and the thorns grew up, and choked it, and it yielded no fruit.

Thorny ground is the next case supposed: and this is a sadder case than either

(a) St. Luke viii. 4.

(b) St. Luke viii. 6.

(c) St. Luke viii. 6.

of the former; for here, the seed springs up more hopefully, inasmuch as the soil is deeper. But, from that very circumstance, the ground harbors thorns as well.

This third case is very different from either of the others. There is no lack of earth *here*. The thing required is a *careful weeding of the soil*; without which, neither a good soil,—nor good seed,—nor the good hand of God Himself, sowing the seed,—will be of any avail. See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 7.

See more in the note on St. Luke viii. 7.

8 And other fell on good ground, and did yield fruit that sprung up and increased; and brought forth, some thirty, and some sixty, and some an hundred.

“By the way-side,”—“on stony ground,”—“among thorns,”—“on good ground;” there are great diversities of soil then, but the Seed and the Sower are still one and the same. It does not depend on the Sower, nor on the Seed,—but *on the heart* into which the Seed falls,—whether it shall come to perfection, or whether it shall perish.

Not that we are to look upon these conditions of heart,—whether good or bad,—as fixed and unalterable. It is not so with earthly soils; the frequent injunctions of ALMIGHTY God convince us that it cannot be so with human hearts either. “Harden not your hearts:”(d) “Wash you, make you clean:”(e) “Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double-minded:”(f) “Make you a new heart, and a new spirit; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?”(g) What mean these, and the like commands, but that, by God’s Grace, the beaten highway may become changed into a fruitful field? that labour may avail to deepen the soil, as well as break up the rock? purge away the thorns, which before choked the Word and rendered it unfruitful? Yea, cause the wilderness to “blossom as the rose?”(h) The Reader is requested to refer to some remarks in the note on St. Mark xiii. 23, on this subject.

Take notice, that as there are *three cases of unfruitfulness* described,—proceeding, each, from a different cause; so, there are *three degrees of fruitfulness*, also, enumerated: but the cause of fruitfulness is only *one*.

See more in the notes on St. Matthew xiii. 8, and St. Luke viii. 8.

9 And He said unto them, He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.

These solemn and significant words are found in this place, in all the three Gospels: viz. in St. Matt. xiii. 9, and St. Luke viii. 8. They seem to have been often on our Lord’s lips: for a record has been preserved of no less than *six* occasions on which He used them: viz. St. Matt. xi. 15: xiii. 43. St. Mark iv. 23: and vii. 16. St. Luke xiv. 35; and the present place. In St. John’s *Gospel* they are not once found; but in the Book of *Revelation*, no less than eight times. The reader may like to have the places to refer to. They are these: Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29: iii. 6, 13, 22: xiii. 9.

10 And when He was alone, they that were about Him with the Twelve asked of Him the Parable.

The order of events is here broken through by the Evangelist; who proceeds to tell us what took place after our SAVIOUR had “sent the multitudes away,” and “gone into the House.” Compare St. Matthew xiii. 36, with verse 34 of the present chapter.

11 And He said unto them, Unto you it is given to know the mystery of the Kingdom of God: but unto them that are without, all *these* things are done in Parables:

See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 11. Observe also, what follows, in St. Matthew’s Gospel,—with the notes thereon.

“Them that are *without*:”—the expression recurs in 1 Cor. v. 12, 13: Colossians iv. 5: 1 Thess. iv. 12.

(d) Psalm xev. 8.

(g) Ezekiel xviii. 31.

(e) Isaiah i. 16.

(h) Isaiah xxxv. 1.

(f) St. James iv. 8.

12 That seeing they may see, and not perceive; and hearing they may hear, and not understand;

“Because,” as it is said in St. Matthew’s Gospel, (xiii. 13,) “they seeing, *see not*; and hearing, *hear not*.” See the next note.

lest at any time they should be converted, and *their* sins should be forgiven them.

The best Comment on this very elliptical quotation of Isaiah vi. 10, is supplied by the parallel place in St. Matthew’s Gospel,—xiii. 14, 15; which see. The reader is also requested to consult the note on St. Matt. xiii. 13.

It will be perceived, (by a comparison of this verse with the place in St. Matthew’s Gospel, last cited,) that the words of our LORD Himself, as well as those of His Prophet, are only partially recorded by St. Mark. This has been partly shown above already, in the note on the first half of the present verse.

13 And He said unto them, Know ye not this Parable? and how then will ye know all Parables?

The Divine Speaker seems to imply that “the parable of the Sower” affords the simplest type or pattern of a parable.

“Note,” says an old writer, “that this is the first parable that has been given with its interpretation; and we must beware, where our LORD expounds His own teaching, that we do not presume to understand anything either more or less, or any way otherwise than as so expounded by Him.” And yet, as another, obviously enough, remarks,—“those things which He silently left to our understanding, we must observe for ourselves.”

14 The Sower soweth the Word.

We know, from St. Luke viii. 11, that “The Seed is the Word of God;” but who is “*the Sower*?”—If we must point to one only, doubtless CHRIST is he; who “*came forth from the FATHER*, and was come into the World,”—as it is said in St. John xvi. 28. Next, it was the Apostles of our LORD,—in whose persons, Himself “went forth” to sow the Divine Seed among the Gentiles. But, in truth, it is every one who goes forth in the Name of CHRIST, and with His Authority,—every one *whom He sends*.

Consider then, what is implied by this: even that the Preacher’s skill is a thing of slender moment. Men inquire *what seed* has been sown: never, *who* sowed it? See the end of the note on the first part of St. Luke viii. 5. Paul may have planted, and Apollos watered; “but God gave the increase.”(i) It is *in the Seed*, not *in the Sower*: say rather, it is on *GOD*, not on *Man*,—that the miracle of growth depends.

Consider next what is implied by this resemblance of the Word to *Seed*. We are clearly taught thereby, that the Word, “hath in it a productive virtue, to bring forth fruit according to its kind; that is, the fruit of a *new life*. Not only a new habit and fashion of life without; but a new nature, a new kind of life within; new thoughts, a new estimate of things, new delights and actions.

“When the Word reveals God, His Greatness and Holiness, then, it begets pious Fear and Reverence, and study of conformity to Him.

“When it reveals His Goodness and Mercy, it works Love and Confidence.

“When it holds up to our view CHRIST crucified, it crucifies the soul to the world, and the world to it.

“When it represents those rich things which are laid up for us, *that* blessed inheritance of the Saints, then, it makes all the lustre of this world vanish; shows how poor it is; weans and calls off the heart from it; raising it to those higher hopes, and setting it on the project of a crown.

“And so, it is a seed of noble thoughts, and of a behaviour suitable in a Christian; as, in the exposition of this parable, it is called the *Word of the Kingdom*: an *immortal Seed*, as St. Peter calls it,(k) springing up to no less than eternal Life.”—The words are pious Leighton’s.

15 And these are they by the wayside, where the Word is sown

(i) 1 Cor. iii. 6.

(k) 1 St. Peter i. 23.

but when they have heard, Satan cometh immediately, and taketh away the Word that was sown in their hearts.

"They have *heard*;" but they have not *understood*. See St. Matt. xiii. 19. In hearts so hardened,—"*highway hearts*, which all temptations pass through at their pleasure,"—hearts which are "the *common road* of all kinds of foolish brutish thoughts,"—what hope is there that seed could take root and grow? Yet, mark the malice of the Enemy. He permits not even the chance of it. The Prince of the Power of the Air,^(l)—who is likened in the parable to a winged bird,—"*cometh immediately*,^(m) and taketh away the word that was sown." That is, he diverts men from reflection, and serious thoughts, and the remembrance of good words spoken. If he spares a few grains, they get "*trodden down*,"—as St. Luke hints in chapter viii. 5. But the Psalmist provided against either calamity: for, (saith he,) "They words have I *hid within my heart*."⁽ⁿ⁾

16 And these are they likewise which are sown on stony ground; who, when they have heard the Word, immediately receive it with gladness;

The hearts in ver 15, had become hardened *by use*: these, are hard *by nature*: "hearts not softened to receive deeply the engrafted Word with meekness,—with humble yielding and submission to it. Yet even these, at first, often receive the Word with gladness. They have a little present delight in it; are moved and taken with the Sermon,—possibly even to the shedding of some tears. But the misery is, there is no depth of Earth. The Word sinks not." See the note on St. Matthew xiii. 21.

This allusion to the delight which the Doctrines of the Gospel give even to hard and impenitent hearts, is a most striking circumstance. You will hear men praise the simplicity,—the beauty,—the pure morality of the Gospel. As Leighton says, a text of Scripture will sometimes move them to tears. You would suppose that they intended to act up to their light, and avail themselves of their knowledge; but alas, it is not so.

See more in the note on St. Luke viii. 13.

17 And have no root in themselves, and so endure but for a time: afterward, when affliction or persecution ariseth for the Word's sake, immediately they are offended.

Hence the necessity of "*being rooted and grounded in Love*;"^(o) "*continuing in the Faith, grounded and settled*;"^(p) "*rooted and built up in*" CHRIST.^(q)—Else the scorching heat of persecution, ("when the sun is up," as we read in ver. 6.)—some fiery trial^(r) from within, or from without,—proves fatal to this class of Believers.

This, then, is a very different case from the last. *There* the Devil had but to steal away the seed. *Here*, it has sprung up: the Enemy must contrive a way to destroy it. Those very things which should have hastened its perfection,—that very trial of Faith which should have wrought Patience,^(s)—becomes the instrument of decay and ruin.

18, 19 And these are they which are sown among thorns: such as hear the Word, and the cares of this World, and the deceitfulness of riches, and the lust of other things entering in, choke the Word, and it becometh unfruitful.

"Many are thus almost at Heaven," says Leighton: "there is so much desire of renovation, and some endeavours after it; and yet, the thorns prevail. Miserable thorns, the base things of a perishing life: drawing away the strength of affections, sucking the sap of the soul!"

"Cares," therefore,—"*riches*,"—and "*pleasures*," as St. Luke^(t) briefly expresses

(l) 1 Ephes. ii. 2.

(m) Mark this; and compare the language of Job i. 16, 17, 18: ii. 6, 7.

(n) Psalm cxix. 11.

(o) Ephes. iii. 17.

(p) Coloss. i. 23.

(q) Coloss. ii. 7.

(r) 1 St. Peter iv. 12.

(s) St. James i. 3. Compare 1 St. Peter i. 7.

(t) St. Luke viii. 14.

what the present Evangelist hath somewhat more largely delivered: these are *the thorns* which choke the Word, and render it unfruitful. The Beloved Disciple makes the same enumeration, but in a backward order: "The lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eye, and the pride of life."(*u*) "And for how long is the advantage and delight of these?" asks the writer already quoted. "Alas, that so poor things should prejudice us against the rich and blessed increase of this Divine Seed!"

See the notes on St. Matthew xiii. 22, and St. Luke viii. 14.

20 And these are they which are sown on good ground; such as hear the Word and receive *it*, and bring forth fruit, some thirty-fold, some sixty, and some an hundred.

"Good ground:" "an honest and good heart:"(*x*) "there is not much fineness here, not many questions and disputes; but honest simplicity, sweet sincerity,—*that* is all! A humble, single desire to know and to do the Will of God; and this, from Love to Himself! This makes the soul abound in the *fruit* of Holiness. Different degrees there are, indeed: "some thirty-fold, some sixty, some an hundred:" yet, the lowest are aiming at the highest; not resting satisfied, still growing more fruitful. If thirty last year, desiring to bring forth sixty, this.

"*That* is the great point, and we ought to examine it; for much is sown and little brought forth. Our God hath done much for us: (what more *could* be done?) Yet, when grapes were expected, wild grapes are produced. What becomes of all? *Who* grows to be more spiritual, more humble and meek, more like CHRIST, more self-denying, fuller of Love to God and one-another? *Some*,—but, alas, how few! All the land is sown, and *that* plentifully, with the good Seed: but what comes for the most part? Cockle, and no grain."

Where Leighton has already written so piously and so well, it would be folly to seek to express the same thing in other words. He adds:—"Now, that you may be fruitful, examine well your own hearts. Pluck up, weed out; for there are still thorns. Some will grow; but he is the happiest man who hath the sharpest eye and the busiest hand, spying them out, and plucking them up. And above all, pray; pray before, after, and in hearing. Dart up desires to God. He is the LORD of the Harvest, whose influence doth all. The difference of the soil makes indeed the difference of success: but the LORD hath the privilege of bettering the soil. He who framed the heart, changes it when, and how, He will. There is a curse on all grounds, naturally, which fell on the Earth for Man's sake; but fell more on the ground of Man's own heart within him: "*Thorns and thistles shall it bring forth.*"(*y*) Now it is He that denounceth that curse, who alone hath power to remove it. He is both the Sovereign owner of the Seed, and the changer of the Soil; He turns a wilderness into Carmel by His Spirit; and no ground, no heart, can be good, till He change it."

See more in the notes on St. Matthew xiii. 23, and St. Luke viii. 15.

21 And He said unto them, Is a candle brought to be put under a bushel, or under a bed? and not to be set on a candlestick?

The original is,—"*Does a Lamp come, to be put under a modius?*"—that is, a corn-measure containing more than a peck, and less than a bushel.

Much less, (it seems to be implied,) hath Light itself come into the World, (*z*)—much less am I, the True Light, come into the World, (*a*)—to deliver precepts which are to be hid. My Doctrine shall not be covered; but, on the contrary, its light shall be shed abroad, for the use and advantage of all. As the Lamp is set upon the Lamp-stand,—the Candle on the Candlestick,—so will I give and bequeath Light to My Church, which is the instrument contrived by Me for holding, bearing aloft, and preserving this sacred Light. And to *you*, in the first instance, do I expound all mysteries; in order that, in after times, ye may dispense Light to others also,—not shunning to declare to all the flock over which the HOLY GHOST shall make you overseers, the whole Counsel of God. (*b*) See that ye neither quench My Light through Self-Indulgence, (the Corn-measure,)—nor hide it through Sloth, (the bed!)

(*u*) 1 St. John ii. 16.

(*z*) St. John iii. 19.

(*x*) St. Luke viii. 15.

(*a*) St. John xii. 46.

(*y*) Gen. iii. 18.

(*b*) Compare Acts xx. 27, 28.

Concerning the "Candlestick," see by all means Revelation i. 12, 13, and especially 20. Consider also Exodus xxv. 31 and 37; and Zechariah iv. 2.

22, 23 For there is nothing hid, which shall not be manifested; neither was any thing kept secret, but that it should come abroad. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

See above, the note on ver. 9.

24 And He said unto them, Take heed what ye hear: with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you: and unto you that hear shall more be given.

In St. Luke viii. 18, we read,—“Take heed *how* ye hear.” That is, our LORD cautions His Disciples lest any of the things which He delivered to them, should escape them. But how difficult is the saying which follows! It has been explained by some excellent Divines, to mean,—“According to the measure of attention which you bestow upon My teaching, shall knowledge be measured out to you; and to you that hear attentively, shall further instruction be given.” Or, in the words of an ancient,—“Whatsoever degree of application ye bring, in that degree ye will receive profit.” But it seems rather to mean, Dispense freely the light and knowledge with which you are entrusted,—and with the same freedom, in the same full measure, shall more be dispensed to you. Compare the injunction of the Good Samaritan to him that kept the Inn,—“Whatsoever thou spendest more, when I come again, I will repay thee.”(c) Any of these meanings, in fact, suit the place very well: but consider the different use which our LORD makes of the same proverbial expression in St. Matthew vii. 2. . . . It is by the way, a matter full of wonder and delight, thus to observe the different senses in which He “in whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom,” seems to have employed the same form of words, on different occasions.

25 For he that hath, to him shall be given: and he that hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he hath.

This is another of the mysterious sayings which are found more than once on the lips of our LORD. It is given, with a remarkable difference, in the parallel place of St. Luke's Gospel,—viii. 18. From St. Matthew xiii. 12, (where see the note,) it would appear to have been *twice* used by the Divine Speaker during the present discourse. It recurs in St. Matthew xxv. 29, and St. Luke xix. 26.

In every place where these words are found, they seem to contain the same general warning that slighted privileges and neglected opportunities do but entail, as a punishment, the withdrawal of the first,—the denial of the second. Whereas, if we diligently avail ourselves of the opportunities vouchsafed us, we have a good ground to hope for the bestowal of more. But in this place, the words are of course to be taken with those which precede; and they will relate to advances in spiritual knowledge, growth in holiness.

The parable of “the Seed growing secretly” follows; which is the only parable peculiar to St. Mark's Gospel.

26 And He said, So is the Kingdom of God, as if a man should cast Seed into the ground;

Note, that “Seed” again supplies the image; and, as before, it is *wheat* which is sown. See ver. 28,—To use the striking words of an excellent modern writer,—it “tells us, that, though the Gospel appears to spread by human means, it is really God who nourishes it. See 1 Cor. iii. 6.”

27 and should sleep and rise, night and day, and the Seed should spring and grow up, he knoweth not how.

By which words our LORD calls attention to a mighty wonder which yet creates no surprise, because it is so very common,—the growth, namely, of seeds. The

(c) St. Luke x. 35.

parable teaches that, as a seed springs and grows up,—a man “knoweth not how;” so is it with the growth of CHRIST’S Kingdom on Earth. As surely, yet as mysteriously and unaccountably,—as if by virtue of a natural law impressed upon it,—“the Kingdom of God” grows; will continue growing, until it hath overspread the whole Earth. It has a secret energy of its own,—a principle of life and growth within itself. This Parable, therefore, forcibly recalls *that* of the “leaven which a woman took and hid in three measures of meal, until the whole was leavened.”(d) St. Matthew gives the one,—St. Mark the other.

Observe, that as the Woman in the parable hid the leaven, and then doubtless went her way; so is it here specially noticed that the Sower has done all that is required of him, after he has sown his seed. He may then “sleep and rise,”—pass his nights in rest, and his days in labour. In due season, he will find that the seed has obeyed the law of its being, and come to maturity.

We need not inquire *who* is the Sower in this parable: for here it is not the act of the Sower, but, simply the property of the Seed which is meant to engage our attention. The secret, yet certain growth of seeds, supplies all the teaching which our LORD meant His parable to convey. And yet, if the inquiry *must* be made, let it suffice us to reflect that the Sower is (1st) CHRIST; who, when He had planted the Gospel upon Earth, and filled it with living energy, returned to the Bosom of the FATHER;—having “*slept*” and “*risen*,” as none ever slept and rose before. In this case, the words—“he knoweth not how,” must not be taken literally, and pressed to their full extent. As an ancient remarks, they “show the free will of those who receive the Word; for He commits a work to their will; and does not work the whole.” “For the Earth,” (as we shall hear in the very next verse,) “bringeth forth fruit of herself.” (2dly) The Sower is every person whom the Providence of ALMIGHTY GOD has either made the Instrument of conveying the Truth to others; or has brought, personally, to the knowledge of the Truth.

In the former case,—let him be persuaded that as he can pretend to none of the glory of the growth which follows: so neither need he vex himself with undue solicitude about it. He must have *Faith*. He has already planted; he may yet water: but it is God, and God only, who “*giveth the increase*.”(e)

In the latter case, let him be convinced that having once received the Gospel into his heart, and hid it there,—it sufficeth. He need ask no further questions; nor torment himself with curious carnal inquiries concerning the secret history, and invisible progress of his spiritual life. The Kingdom of Heaven within him will be developed according to its own laws. He may henceforth sleep and wake, and leave the mystery of his own growth in the hands of God. There will come up first the blade,—then, the ear,—at last, the full corn in the ear. “When the fruit is brought forth,” he will himself come to his grave, “like as a shock of corn cometh in, in his season.”(f) In this case, not *he*, but another, “putteth in the sickle.”

28 For the Earth bringeth forth fruit of herself; first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.

Precious is it to hear the Author of Creation thus descanting upon His own wonderful works! There are three stages, therefore, in the growth of corn: the blade—the ear—the full corn in the ear. And these may correspond with three stages of spiritual growth: the babes in CHRIST,—the strong,—and the stature of a perfect man. Compare 1 St. John ii. 13.

Consider the lovely picture of progressive growth in goodness which St. Peter supplies in his second Epistle,—i. 5 to 8: where, take notice that Faith is the root, and Charity the full corn in the ear.

29 But when the fruit is brought forth, immediately He putteth in the sickle, because the Harvest is come.

Rather,—“when the fruit yield [itself;]” that is, “when the fruit *is ripe*.” Compare the language of Revelation xiv. 14, 15.

Who shall know so well as God, *when* the fruit is ripe? And yet we murmur at early Death,—and call it premature, untimely, and the like!

(d) St. Matth. xiii. 33.

(e) 1 Corinthians iii. 7.

(f) Job v. 26.

30 And He said, Whereunto shall we liken the Kingdom of God? or with what comparison shall we compare it?

The Maker of all things casts His Eye abroad over His Works, in quest of some object whereunto He may compare, in respect of its mighty increase, that Heavenly Kingdom which He came on Earth to found.

31 *It is like a Grain of Mustard seed,*

Take notice, that in St. Matthew's Gospel,—xiii. 31,—the parable proceeds, "Which a man took, and sowed *in his field*."—In St. Luke's,—xiii. 19.—it is, "which a man took, and cast *into his garden*."

which, when it is sown in the earth, is less than all the seeds that be in the earth:

Our Lord's words may not be pressed beyond their proper limits. "Small as a grain of mustard seed," was a proverbial expression among the people whom our Lord was addressing. It was used to denote anything exceedingly small. See St. Luke xvii. 6.

From *seeds*, again, the Author of Creation draws a Heavenly Lesson. But the "Kingdom of God," (that is, the Church of Christ,) is here compared to a grain of *mustard seed*: whereby our Lord directs attention to the extreme smallness of its beginning. The contrast between the smallness of the Church in her beginning,—and her vastness in the end, is the point of the present parable; and suggests why a grain of *mustard seed* was chosen by our Lord in preference to any nobler plant.

Mustard seed, moreover, may have been chosen, because it possesses a pungent fiery flavour;—yields its strength by being crushed and bruised;—rescues other things from the charge of being tasteless and insipid;—and besides many wholesome properties, has not a few medicinal virtues also. If all this seems insufficient, then let it be remembered that He who chose the image of a grain of Mustard Seed is the same God who "hath chosen the foolish things of the World to confound the wise; and . . . the weak things of the World to confound the things which are mighty. And base things of the World, and things which are despised, hath God chosen."(*g*)

32 but when it is sown, it groweth up, and becometh greater than all herbs,

Our Lord speaks of the Mustard Tree as it is found in eastern countries.

Was not the smallness of the Seed strikingly set forth before men's eyes, even while the Divine Speaker delivered the present Parable? for surely, the ship where-in our Lord sat with His Disciples, was, in a manner, the very "grain of mustard seed" of which He was speaking! Nay,—He Himself was that Seed; for in *Him*,—the despised and rejected One,—did the Church, as yet, dwell. But, as the same Lord had spoken by His Prophet,—"it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's House shall be established in the top of the Mountains, and shall be exalted above the Hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."^(h) And again,—"The Earth shall be filled with the knowledge of the Glory of the Lord, as the waters cover the Sea."⁽ⁱ⁾

So small, too, is the seed which, at Holy Baptism, is sown in the heart of the Infant Christian. Contrast that small beginning, with the mighty fruits of Piety and Learning which it may be made to bear in the end!

and shooteth out great branches;

"Shooteth out *great branches*!" Yea, into America, India, and the Islands of the East: until all "the Kingdoms of this World" shall "become the Kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ; and He shall reign for ever and ever."^(k)

Under a kindred figure, the growth of *that* Earthly Kingdom which was to prove a type of the Heavenly,—had been portrayed. "It filled the land. The hills

(*g*) 1 Cor. i. 27, 28.

(*i*) Quoted by Habakkuk (ii. 14,) from Isaiah xi. 9.

(*h*) Isaiah ii. 2,—quoted by Micah iv. 1.

(*k*) Revelation xi. 15.

were covered with the shadow of it, and the boughs thereof were like the goodly cedars. She sent out her boughs unto the Sea, and her branches unto the River.”(l)

so that the fowls of the air may lodge under the shadow of it.

This is the case with the Mustard Tree in the East. Its seed is a favourite food with birds; so that “the fowls of the air” find within its shadow both meat and a home. Compare the language of Revelation xxii. 2.

So, in Ezekiel’s prophecy,—when “God promiseth to plant the cedar of the Gospel,”(m)—it is said, “In the mountain of the height of Israel will I plant it: and it shall bring forth boughs, and bear fruit, and be a goodly cedar: *and under it shall dwell all fowl of every wing*; in the shadow of the branches thereof, shall they dwell.”(n)

We find it declared of the Great Tree, under which image the fate of Nebuchadnezzar the king was set forth in a vision,—that “the fowls of the Heaven dwelt in the boughs thereof.”(o) The same thing is noticed in respect of the Assyrian’s glory,—in Ezekiel xxxi. 6: the picture of which fills an entire chapter. And this might suggest that the feature in question is merely descriptive of a mighty tree. Yet is it impossible to doubt that the words must have a *meaning*, as well, in this place; a purpose belonging to the general scope of the Parable. And what is truer of CHRIST’s Holy Church, than that it proves a haven of rest,—“a refuge from the storm,” and “a shadow from the heat,”(p)—for all those restless, weary Spirits which, like birds of the air, would else be without a home? For *all* find refuge there: “fowls of *every wing*,” as it is said in another place.(q)

33 And with many such Parables spake He the Word unto them, as they were able to hear it.

Out of which statement of the Evangelist, two remarks arise naturally. It appears that we are presented in the Gospel, with only a *few* of the Parables which our LORD actually delivered on this occasion;—types, doubtless, of all the rest. And further, dark as the teaching by Parables in a manner was, that the Divine Speaker had a regard, in all He said, to the powers of those who heard Him speak. He delivered each mysterious saying—“*as they were able to bear it.*” Compare the note on St. Matthew xiii. 13.

34 But without a Parable spake He not unto them: and when they were alone, He expounded all things to His Disciples.

That is, after our SAVIOUR had “sent the multitudes away,” and gone “into the House,”—as St. Matthew explains. The narrative is continued in the Gospel of the last-named Evangelist,—xiii. 36 to 53.

35, 36 And the same day, when the even was come, He saith unto them, Let us pass over unto the other side. And when they had sent away the multitude, they took Him even as He was in the Ship.

“Even as He was:”—that is, weary as He was,—reclining on a pillow at the stern of the boat. For He had entered into the Ship first, and the Disciples had followed Him;—as St. Matthew relates particularly: viii. 23.

And there were also with Him other little ships.

These “other little ships” launched forth, doubtless, in order to share the blessedness of His company. Take notice that the consequence of their thus endeavouring to keep near to CHRIST, was, that they were speedily called upon to partake the dangers of the storm. Fail not, however, also to observe that they were with One who had power to still the Wind and the Sea, in His own good time; and to produce a perfect calm.

So fares it with every one who makes bold ventures of Faith in CHRIST’s service. At first, discouragement meets,—and, it may be, danger overtakes him. In his voy-

(l) See Psalm lxxx. 9 to 11.

(m) Ezekiel xvii. 23.

(n) Isaiah xxv. 4.

(m) See the heading of Ezekiel xvii.

(o) Daniel iv. 12.

(q) Ezekiel xvii.

age across "the waves of this troublesome world," he is vexed with many storms. But "the end of that man is *peace*." (r) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on Thee." (s) Yea, CHRIST maketh the very "storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still." (t)

37 And there arose a great storm of Wind, and the waves beat into the ship, so that it was now full.

Rather,—*"was already filling."* It is interesting to compare the several accounts of this Storm which are found in the three first Gospels. See St. Matthew viii. 23 to 27: St. Luke viii. 22 to 25.

38 And He was in the hinder part of the ship, asleep on a pillow: and they awake Him, and say unto Him, Master, carest Thou not that we perish?

As if, where the SAVIOUR was, there could be Danger! As if, in the presence of LIFE itself, there could be Death!

"Asleep;"—"yet was it God Himself, who keepeth over His people a sleepless and eternal watch, while He seems to them in His Providence as asleep, and as one that heareth not; though, in reality, He is trying their Faith, and waiting for their Prayers."

39 And He arose, and rebuked the Wind, and said unto the Sea, Peace, be still.

Showing that all Creation is conscious of its Creator. The winds, which drove the waves, fell at His rebuke: the waves, before His command, grew calm. He even *spoke* to the Sea, as if it had been a living creature. Consider such remarkable places as the following,—Ps. xvi. 11 to 13; xlviii. 4, 7 to 9. Isaiah lv. 12. St. Luke xix. 40, &c. . . . "O LORD God of hosts, who is a strong LORD like unto Thee? . . . Thou rulest the raging of the Sea: when the waves thereof arise, Thou stillest them!" (a)

Surely, none who read the account of this miracle can require reminding that the Storm, no less than the Calm which followed, was *His* work.

And the Wind ceased, and there was a great calm.

Here, then, was a *double* miracle: for, after a storm at sea, when the wind ceases, there is *not* "a great calm;" but, on the contrary, the waves continue to heave and swell for hours. Read the notes on the second half of St. Mark i. 31.

Learn from this, not to distrust the power and providence of God. Men sometimes are prone to despair; for they think that were some present grief removed, there would still remain this and that disastrous consequence. Shall we not learn a different lesson from the stilling of the storm on the Lake? When *He* says, "Peace, be still,"—and the storm hath "ceased,"—will there not be "*a great calm*," also?

"With such simplicity," in the words of an excellent living writer, "is mentioned a scene beyond what Poet or Painter could portray: in sublime majesty second to nothing since the Creation of the World,—save in the calm of one departed from the body; and escaped from the storms of this World to be with CHRIST in peace."

40 And he said unto them, Why are ye so fearful? how is it that ye have no Faith?

"No faith;"—yet did they wake their LORD,—call loudly on Him,—and show by their words that they knew that He had power to save them. Such actions, therefore, do not prove that a man has Faith: yea, rather, they are consistent with an utter want of Faith.

(r) Ps. xxxvii. 37.

(t) Ps. cvii. 29.

(s) Ps. xxvi. 3.

(u) Ps. lxxxix. 8, 9.

41 And they feared exceedingly, and said one to another, What manner of Man is this, that even the Wind and the Sea obey Him?

Not that they doubted His Divinity: but they found it impossible,—or they did not attempt,—to realize the notion that this was He who “rideth upon the Heavens of Heavens;”(x) “who maketh the clouds His Chariot; who walketh upon the wings of the Wind;”(y) “who hath measured the waters in the hollow of His Hand.”(z)

THE PRAYER.

GRANT, O LORD, we beseech Thee, that the course of this World may be so peaceably ordered by Thy governance, that Thy Church may joyfully serve Thee in all godly quietness; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER V.

1 CHRIST *delivering the possessed of the legion of devils.* 13 *They enter into the swine.* 25 *He healeth the woman of the bloody issue.* 35 *And raiseth from death Jarius his daughter.*

1 AND they came over unto the other side of the sea, into the country of the Gadarenes.

Escaped from the perils of the storm, the Blessed Company reach the Eastern shore of the Sea of Galilee,—where stood the towns of Gergesa(a) and Gadara. The latter was the chief City of that part of Palestine,—called Peræa; and was inhabited chiefly by heathens.

The miracle performed by our Blessed LORD on the Demoniacs of Gadara, is one of the most astonishing histories in the Gospels. It contains more hints as to the nature of demoniacal possession, than any other narrative of the same class; but it raises our curiosity also proportionably higher; and suggests a greater number of inquiries than usual, without, in a corresponding degree, supplying answers to them.

Thus, we are led to inquire whether, and to what extent, this demoniac retained his own proper consciousness? To what extent was he a free agent? or, Was he wholly at the merey of another? By what means, and how far, did the evil Spirits know our SAVIOUR, the moment they saw Him, to be the Son of God? Can it be in any way explained how a legion of devils,—two thousand perhaps and upwards,—should have taken up their abode in one human temple? Why did they ask the favour here mentioned? And did they foresee what would be the consequence of

(x) Ps. lxxviii. 33.

(z) Isaiah xl. 12.

(y) Ps. civ. 3.

(a) See St. Matth. viii. 28.

having the favour granted? Lastly, what effect did the final issue produce upon themselves? See below, on verses 6 and 13.

To inquiries of this class, which the narrative before us suggests, may be added others: as, Whether possession was the consequence of sinful indulgence? whether the same thing, or only something like it, exists at the present day in Christendom? or in any other part of the world? and what connection (if any) subsists between physical maladies and the agency of evil Spirits?

On almost all these points we are profoundly ignorant; and the sooner,—as well as the more plainly this is stated, the better. The Reader of a Commentary must not expect to find clear light thrown on every branch of a subject where Reason is an insufficient guide,—and Revelation has been so nearly silent. In all such matters let him be well persuaded that his Guide is almost as much at fault as himself, and may be said to know next to nothing.

2 And when He was come out of the ship, immediately there met Him out of the tombs a Man with an unclean Spirit,

St. Luke, also, speaks in the singular, of “a certain man;” (b) but St. Matthew describes how “there met Him *two* possessed with devils.” (c) The explanation commonly given of this diversity is no doubt the true one,—namely, that St. Mark and St. Luke confine themselves to the history of the more remarkable demoniac of the two.

3 who had *his* dwelling among the tombs; and no man could bind him, no, not with chains:

See the note on the last half of St. Matthew viii. 28. The Evangelist proceeds to reveal an awful picture:—

4 because that he had been often bound with fetters and chains, and the chains had been plucked asunder by him, and the fetters broken in pieces: neither could any *man* tame him.

The multitude of spirits which had taken up their abode in this man, may explain the wonderful muscular strength here ascribed to him. Compare the terrible picture of violence recorded in Acts xix. 16.

5 And always, night and day, he was in the mountains, and in the tombs, crying and cutting himself with stones.

A picture of suffering and misery, which St. Mark has given more in detail than either of the other Evangelists. See the note prefixed to St. Mark i.

Surely, the tempest of the soul, which our Lord proceeded to appease, was even wilder and more terrific than that strife of the elements which we lately beheld submissive to His Word!

6 But when he saw JESUS afar off, he ran and worshipped Him,

Observe in what marked contrast this verse stands with that which immediately follows. The Demoniac “*ran*” to our Lord, when he saw Him “*afar off*!” yet, not because he rejoiced in the presence of the Mighty Stranger; for he begins “*What have I to do with Thee?*” &c. Again, he “*fell down before Him*,” (d) and “*worshipped*!” yet not in Reverence and Love, but with something between Terror and Hate; as appears from the words of his address.

Was there any double consciousness here? Did the wretched Demoniac hasten into the presence of CHRIST, because, even in the depth of his misery,—as a *man*, he felt his need of a SAVIOUR: but, while he was in the very attitude of supplication, was it perhaps not so much *he*, as the *Legion*, which spake by his lips?

7 and cried with a loud voice, and said, What have I to do with Thee, JESUS, *Thou* SON of the Most High God? I adjure Thee by God, that Thou torment me not.

8 For He said unto him, Come out of the man, *thou* unclean Spirit.

(b) St. Luke viii. 27.

(c) St. Matth. viii. 28.

(d) St. Luke viii. 28.

On this occasion, then, the Enemy obeys not instantly; but presumes to hold parley with his LORD. The command to come out of the man, seems to have been given before verse 7: but it is not obeyed till verse 13. There is a brief wrestling(e) between the Strong Man armed, keeping his palace,(f) and CHRIST,—the Stronger than the Strong. In the course of such encounters, the miserable man possessed, often suffered terribly.(g) Consider, in connection with this, St. Mark ix. 29, and the narrative which goes before: also, St. Luke iv. 33 to 35.

9 And He asked him, What *is* thy name? And he answered, saying, My name *is* Legion: for we are many.

Not that our LORD needed the information. He knew full well the name and the number of His enemies. But by causing this miserable man,—or rather the spirits by which he was possessed,—to return the answer recorded in the text, all present were made acquainted with the fact; which, immediately after, obtained confirmation from the headlong violence of the two thousand swine. Compare the latter part of verse 30, and see the note there.

Another instance of the Temple of the HOLY GHOST thus “become the habitation of Devils, and the hold of every foul spirit”(h)—invaded, not by one, but by many,—is supplied by the history of Mary Magdalene.(i) See also St. Matthew xii. 45.

On the name, “Legion,” (which was the largest division of the Roman Army,) see the note on St. Luke viii. 30.

10 And he besought Him much that He would not send them away out of the country.

So that the miserable spirits love one spot of Earth more than another, and dread expulsion from it! But the thing which this Legion of Devils dreaded most, was, lest our LORD (in whom they recognized their Judge,) should cast them at once into the pit of Hell which is prepared for them. See St. Luke viii. 31, and the note there.

Observe here the perplexing change from the singular to the plural number. “My name,”—“for *we* are,” in verse 9. And, in this verse,—“*he* besought Him, that He would not send *them*.” Presently, it is, “*all* the Devils,”—“send *us*,”—“that *we* may enter,” &c.: whereas at first, (verse 7,) it was,—“What have *I* to do,”—“*I* adjure Thee,”—“torment *me* not,” &c. . . . Shall we ascribe this language, sometimes to the Demoniac, and sometimes to the Legion within him? Or did the change of person arise, as the unclean Spirits spoke by turns in the Demoniac’s person and in their own? See above, on verse 1.

11, 12 Now there was there, nigh unto the mountains, a great herd of swine feeding. And all the Devils besought Him, saying, Send us into the swine, that we may enter into them.

Notice, then, the limited power of the Devils. They can only enter in, where God gives them leave. “But if they have no power over swine,” (as a great Father has remarked,) “the evil Spirits have much less against men,—who are made after the image of God.” Compare Job i. 12, and ii. 6.

Consider also their foul nature, which could desire such an habitation as this. Till now, they had dwelt amid corruption and death; for the tombs had been the place of their abode. See the note on the last half of St. Matthew viii. 28. Since this might no longer be, and they might no longer mar a human form, they covet the bodies of the swine(k) for their habitation. Well might the devils be so often spoken of in the Gospels as *Unclean*!(l)

13 And forthwith JESUS gave them leave. And the unclean Spirits went out, and entered into the swine: and the herd ran violently down

(e) Consider the language of Genesis xxxii. 24, and Ephes. vi. 12.

(f) St. Luke xi. 21.

(g) See St. Mark ix. 20 and 26. Compare St. Luke iv. 35.

(h) Rev. xviii. 2.

(i) St. Luke viii. 2.

(k) Concerning the swine, see Levit. xi. 7, 8, compared with Deut. xiv. 8. Also Is. lxvi. 17.

(l) St. Matthew x. 1. St. Mark i. 27: iii. 11: vi. 7. St. Luke iv. 33, 36. Acts v. 16, viii. 7, &c.

a steep place into the sea, (they were about two thousand;) and were choked in the sea.

By which we are reminded that it is not always a mark of love to grant a petition. Our SAVIOUR complied with the request of those evil Spirits in His wrath. See the note on St. Matthew vii. 8.

Or, was this favour asked by the Devils with deliberate purpose and design to inflict one last severe injury upon the inhabitants of the region which they had been molesting with their presence so long; and from which they foresaw that the hour of their expulsion had arrived? If such were their object, they certainly succeeded in it; not only by causing the destruction of the herd, but by exciting thereby in "the whole city" a dislike and dread of the sacred person of our SAVIOUR. In speculations like these, however, our curiosity finds a limit on every side. We know little or nothing of the nature and state of evil Spirits: nor of the extent of their knowledge: nor what the effect on *them* must have been, when the herd of swine which contained them, "were choked in the sea."

It is sometimes pointed out that this was the only miracle ever wrought by our LORD which was productive of an injurious result—or words to that effect. Others have remarked that the cursing of the fig-tree was another event of the same class. As if man were a proper judge of such matters! or, as if enough were known of such particular transaction to warrant us in making any *judicial* remarks concerning it! We might, with equal reason, apply words of censure to any Divine Visitation on cattle or on the trees of the forest,—the reason of which we know not, and cannot know.

14, 15 And they that fed the swine fled, and told *it* in the city, and in the country. And they went out to see what it was that was done. And they come to JESUS, and see him that was possessed with the Devil, and had the Legion, sitting, and clothed, and in his right mind: and they were afraid.

"Sitting"—"at the feet of Jesus," as St. Luke relates.^(m) And "clothed,"—because, before, as St. Luke informs us, (viii. 27,) the wretched man "*wore no clothes.*" See the note on St. Luke viii. 35.

16, 17 And they that saw *it* told them how it befell to him that was possessed with the Devil, and *also* concerning the swine. And they began to pray Him to depart out of their coasts.

O miserable men! to have thus driven away from themselves their very chiefest good. They "pray Him to depart:" "that is, they beseech Life and Blessedness to go from them. And what does a sinner, when he turns out and rejects motions and inspirations of holiness, lest his lusts and pleasures of Sin should be lost, but dismiss JESUS, lest the swine should be drowned?"

18 And when He was come into the ship, he that had been possessed with the Devil prayed Him that He might be with Him.

He desired to be with his Benefactor; whether from a sense of gratitude and love, which made him feel that to follow our LORD's footsteps must henceforth be his greatest joy: or from dread lest, during our LORD's absence, his many enemies should return;—a thing which we know was possible. See St. Mark ix. 25, and St. Matthew xii. 44, 45.

19 Howbeit JESUS suffered him not, but saith unto him, Go home to thy friends, and tell them how great things the LORD hath done for thee, and hath had compassion on thee.

This reply is very remarkable, and conveys a great lesson. The wish of the healed Demoniac was natural; but God had other purposes for him. Our SAVIOUR told the man, in effect, *how* he might best serve him,—how advance, most effectually, the cause of the Gospel. This was not to be achieved, as the other supposed,

(m) St. Luke viii. 35.

by entering the ship with his Benefactor; but by remaining where he was,—returning to his own home,—and relating to his friends the history of his past misery and present blessedness; as well as the means whereby the transition had been effected. “Come and hear all ye that fear God; and I will declare what He hath done for my soul.”⁽ⁿ⁾ Henceforth, he was to become a living witness, as well as monument of the Mercy and the Power of the REDEEMER. The Reader is referred to the note on St. Luke viii. 39.

Contrast this command, with *that* in St. Matth. viii. 4, and see the note there.

The Gadarenes, who might have had CHRIST for their Teacher,—see ver. 17, and note there,—must henceforth learn the truth, as they may, from the history of this man's experience.

20 And he departed, and began to publish in Decapolis

See the last note on St. Matthew iv.

how great things JESUS had done for him: and all *men* did marvel.

Every word of Scripture is full of teaching;—“is profitable for Doctrine, for Reproof, for Correction, for Instruction in Righteousness.”^(o) Take notice that this Demoniac made the very use of his recovered powers which was intended by his restoration.—A similar example is supplied by Simon's wife's Mother: see the second note on St. Luke iv. 39.—“Make me a clean heart, O God,” says the Psalmist, “and renew a right spirit within me. . . . O give me the comfort of Thy help again, and stablish me with Thy free Spirit:—*then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked, and sinners shall be converted unto Thee.*”^(p) He describes the use which he proposed to make of his recovered powers.—And it is in this manner that God's saints always act. See the note on St. Luke i. 67.

We are next invited to consider two events of quite a different class,—a miracle within a miracle.

21 And when JESUS was passed over again by ship unto the other side, much people gathered unto Him: and He was nigh unto the sea.

Rather,—*the people* were standing nigh, (that is, along side of,) the sea: for our SAVIOUR had now reached the western side of the lake,—the neighbourhood, it may be supposed, of Capernaum.

22 And, behold, there cometh one of the rulers of the synagogue, Jairus by name; and when he saw Him, he fell at His feet,

The *names* of the persons who were objects of our SAVIOUR's mercy, are very seldom given in Scripture: but the name of Jairus may have been recorded for the sake of the Jews,—as a witness to the truth of this miracle. Observe, too, how effectually the present narrative must have closed the mouth of the nation—wrought, as it was, on the Daughter of a Ruler of the Synagogue!

From St. Luke xiii. 14, and Acts xviii. 8 and 17, it might be thought that every synagogue had a single ruler: but from this place, and Acts xiii. 15, it would appear that some had several. It may be that *one* presided. The scene of the present incident was probably Capernaum; in which case, Jairus was, in all likelihood, one of those very “Elders of the Jews”^(q) whom the Centurion sent to our SAVIOUR; and who, in their address, made distinct mention of their synagogue. May not this man have learned to believe in CHRIST from the experience of *that* occasion?

23 and besought Him greatly, saying, My little daughter lieth at the point of death: *I pray Thee*, come and lay thy hands on her, that she may be healed; and she shall live.

“For,” as St. Luke informs us,^(r) “he had one only daughter, about twelve years of age, and she lay a dying.”

This man's request resembled that of the nobleman of Capernaum: St. John iv.

(n) Ps. lxi. 16.

(q) St. Luke vii. 3.

(o) 2 Tim. iii. 16.

(r) St. Luke viii. 42.

(p) Ps. li. 10, 11, 13.

47 and 49. He had not attained to a faith like that of the Centurion. See St. Matthew viii. 8.

24 And *JESUS* went with him; and much people followed him, and thronged Him.

Mark the condescension which he therein displayed. He *could* have healed the ruler's daughter with a word: but He meekly submitted himself to the measure of the man's faith,—and walked, while the multitude thronged Him and pressed Him,^(s) by the father's side; keeping pace with his bodily, as with his spiritual ability to advance. See the end of the note on St. Matthew viii. 2.

It is likely that the great delay which was thus produced served a high purpose. The child, which the father had left dying, was by this time dead. See verse 35. Compare the statement in St. John xi. 6,—When *JESUS* had heard that Lazarus was sick, “He abode *two days* still in the same place where he was. Then, *after that*, He saith to his disciples, Let us go into Judæa.”—We shall do well, from these instances, to cherish the belief, that what often *seems* to be an untoward accident, is in reality a master-piece of Divine contrivance; God's mysterious handiwork, whereby he designs our truest good. The reader is referred to the note on St. Luke v. 17; and to the second note on St. Mark v. 24 and 35.

25 And a certain Woman, which had an issue of blood twelve years,

Whose infirmity, therefore, dated as far back as the life of the child whom the Great Physician was going to restore. But, when the child expired, the afflicted woman became restored to perfect health; and this coincidence supplies an analogy which did not escape the notice of the writers alluded to in the notes on the two next verses.

26 and had suffered many things of many physicians, and had spent all that she had, and was nothing bettered, but rather grew worse,

And no wonder, for the remedies prescribed for such a malady by the Jewish physicians were exceedingly tedious and painful.

It will be seen in the course of the next note, that this poor sufferer has been thought to be an emblem of the Gentile world. “As she had spent all her living upon physicians,” says a famous Bishop of the West, “so the Gentile nations had lost all the gifts of Nature.” It may not, certainly, escape our observation that her condition resembled that of the Younger Son in the Parable,—in whose person the case of the Gentiles is certainly set forth. Like him, she had “*spent all*,”—as it is said of the poor Prodigal in St. Luke xv. 14: like him, she was *unclean*:^(t) like him, she determined at last to arise and go to her father. In the blessed reception which she met with, she resembled the Prodigal no less.

27 when she had heard of *JESUS*, came in the press behind, and touched his garment.

There was, doubtless, great humility in this; but there may have been another reason for the course she pursued. She was *unclean*—see Leviticus xv. 25 to 27; and may not have dared to come openly to *CHRIST*.

We shall do well to connect this instance of our *LORD*'s condescension with that recorded in St. Mark i. 41—where see the note.

The ancients saw allegory and mystery in every part of the Gospel. Very often, we follow them in their interpretations confidently—as when they declare the allegorical teaching of the two miraculous draughts of fishes; for *there* the Church has spoken with almost one voice. Elsewhere, we listen indeed to our Fathers in the Faith with attention; but we follow them doubtingly, or not at all.

In this place, for instance, we will but mention it as a beautiful suggestion, that the uncleanness and defilement of Human Nature is set forth, in emblem, by the woman with an issue of blood. “It could not be cured by many Physicians,^(u)—that is, by the Wise men of this World; and the Law, and the Prophets.” Nay, the disease of our Nature had grown worse. “But the moment it touched the hem

(s) St. Luke viii. 45.

(t) See the note on St. Luke xv. 15.

(u) Compare Jeremiah vi. 14 (and viii. 11) xxx. 12. Micah i. 9, &c.

of CHRIST'S Garment, (that is, His flesh,) it was healed. For 'whosoever believes the SON of God to be Incarnate,' (says this writer,) "touches the hem of His Garment."—Compare the note on St. Luke viii. 44.

Writers of this class bid us also remark that as our SAVIOUR, when He came on Earth, was sent to *the Jews*,—so is He here found directing His footsteps to the House of the Ruler of the Synagogue. But, (they observe,) the Gentiles thronged and pressed upon Him, and snatched a blessing from Him by the way,—the violent, as it were, taking the Kingdom of Heaven by force. Compare the note on ver. 26.

Such thoughts cannot be rejected as absurd. None can pretend to say that they are puerile; or venture to affirm that they are utterly without foundation. But when they proceed from single writers, and are not supported by the analogy of our LORD's recorded sayings,(x) the very insecure basis on which they stand, may never be lost sight of. It is safer, therefore, on the whole, to regard them with indulgent distrust; and to set them down as probably the lovely offspring of a warm imagination, and a pious spirit; lest, in an evil hour, we become blinded by a metaphor, and get cheated of our Birth-right, in the dark.

28 For she said, If I may touch but His clothes, I shall be whole.

Observe that she touched Him first with her mind,—then, with her body.

Notice also the union of Great Humility, and perfect Faith,—as in the good Centurion. See the note on St. Matthew viii. 8. She came *behind* Him;—she said, *If I may but touch His clothes*.

If we were to pursue the train of thought suggested in the last note, it would be obvious to remark that a finger laid on our LORD's outer Garment, represents aptly enough the amount of knowledge with which Gentile Believers drew near to the Incarnate ЖЕHOВАН in the days of His Humiliation.

29 And straightway the fountain of her blood was dried up: and she felt in *her* body that she was healed of that plague.

"Straightway,"—or, as St. Luke says,(y) "Immediately;" so prompt are generally the answers to prayer: and what was this poor sufferer's deed, but a Prayer put into action? See the note on St. Matthew vii. 7.

Mark the contrast between the faith of this poor woman, and that of the Ruler of the Synagogue. (How often do the humblest become our teachers!) The one was drawing our SAVIOUR's footsteps painfully to his House; trembling lest His child's death should first occur, and render his application useless. The other,—blind indeed, yet better taught,—laid her finger unseen, on the border of the SAVIOUR's Garment, and was made whole!

30 And JESUS, immediately knowing in Himself that virtue had gone out of Him,

For so He Himself declared:—"Somebody," He said, "hath touched Me: for *I perceive that virtue is gone out of Me*."(z)

Not of course, that we are to suppose that healing power, or virtue, had flowed forth from the SAVIOUR's Person without His perfect will and consent,—or rather, without His express decree. See the next note.

turned Him about in the press, and said, Who touched My clothes?

This, He by no means said as *needing* the information. Be very sure of that. His own hands had sown the seed of Faith in her heart. Himself had watched its gradual growth; and poured upon it day by day, the continual dew of His blessing. He had permitted the repeated failures of the Physicians to whom she had applied; and witnessed, at last, her resolution to make trial of *Him*. He had beheld her timid approach, and heard the words of her voiceless Confession. "There was not a word in her tongue, but Thou, O LORD, didst know it altogether." "Thou understoodest her thoughts afar off."(a) See the note on St. Luke viii. 45.

(x) The parable of the Draw-net cast into the sea, for example, in St. Matthew xiii. 47 to 50, furnishes an obvious clue to the miracles described in St. Luke v. 1 to 10, and St. John xxi. 3 to 11.

(y) St. Luke viii. 44.

(z) St. Luke viii. 46.

(a) Ps. cxxxix. 2, 4.

Why, then, did our SAVIOUR ask the question here recorded? It was in order to bring the woman forward, and cause that all assembled should hear the History of her affliction,—her faith, and her recovery. Observe how St. Luke describes the result of our LORD's demand: adding what St. Mark says below, in ver. 33, that "she declared before all the people for what cause she had touched Him; and how she was healed immediately." (b) See the note on ver. 32.

Compare the inquiry in verse 9; and see the note there.

31 And His Disciples said unto Him, Thou seest the multitude thronging Thee, and sayest Thou, Who touched Me?

St. Peter appears to have been the chief speaker on this occasion. See St. Luke viii. 45.

Here, then, is set before us a mighty example, and a powerful warning. A multitude of persons *throng*, and *press upon* the SAVIOUR. *One* person only *touches* Him. How was this? It was because only one person out of that great multitude gave Him a particular kind of Touch. *The Touch of Faith* was reserved for *one*. And take notice, that while the thronging and pressing was of no avail, *the Touch of Faith* drew healing virtue out of the very robes of CHRIST.

We may not fail to notice that this place of Scripture stands not only for our warning; but for our example and encouragement likewise. A touch like that of the afflicted Woman may be ours, at the present day, in our approaches to CHRIST; and (what is remarkable,) in a sense far higher than that was permitted to *her*. We have the sure warrant of our SAVIOUR CHRIST for this. "Touch Me not," He said to Mary Magdalen in the Garden, when (doubtless) with outstretched arms she would have embraced His knees;—"Touch Me not, for I am not yet ascended to My FATHER." (c) That is,—the reason why Mary might not touch Him was *because* He had not yet ascended. Touch Me,—He therefore says to us; for now I *am* ascended!

The thronging of the senseless crowd becomes therefore *our* warning; as the touch of the afflicted woman becomes *our* example. And this is a thought for the Sanctuary, where CHRIST is in the midst,—according to His gracious promise: (d) yet, while many carnal natures there press and throng Him, how few reach out the hand of their Heart; feel after,—and by Faith, *find* Him!

Consider again the nature of our approaches to CHRIST in the LORD's Supper. "The Wicked, and such as be void of a lively *Faith*, although they do carnally and visibly press with their teeth the Sacrament of the Body and Blood of CHRIST, yet in no wise are they partakers of CHRIST." So speaks the Church, in her XXXIXth Article. And, in the XXVIIIth, it is well said,—*"The Body of CHRIST is given, taken, and eaten, in the Supper, only after an heavenly and spiritual manner. And the mean whereby the Body of CHRIST is received and eaten . . . is—Faith."* †

Take notice, lastly, that this "touch" is in the power of *all*. See St. Luke vi. 19.

32 And He looked round about to see her that had done this thing.

These words are peculiar to the present Gospel. See the first note on St. Mark i.

The History may well create surprise, when it is remembered how often our LORD enjoined silence on the objects of His Mercy: for here was a miracle, by Him made public and notorious, which might have escaped observation altogether, had it pleased Him not to divulge it. Some reasons of the course He pursued suggest themselves, which it is only becoming in such as we are, to notice and enumerate. Thus, (1stly) our SAVIOUR designed the blessedness of the poor woman herself, by this inquiry; for a mere bodily cure so obtained, and as it were secretly carried away, would have been a small gain. Nay, it might easily have proved no advantage to her at all: whereas the Great Physician showed that He had a medicine for her soul as well as for her body. (2ndly,) A defect even in *her* mighty Faith was corrected; for she supposed that she could obtain a cure at the hands of such an One, and yet remain hid. (3rdly) Here was a display of miraculous knowledge no less than of miraculous power,—which it was fit should not be concealed. (4thly,) By the entire History, men are taught a great lesson of earnestness, faith, and *reality*

(b) St. Luke viii. 47.

(c) St. John xx. 17.

(d) St. Matthew xviii. 20: with which compare the prayer of St. Chrysostom at the end of our daily Service.

in their approaches to CHRIST. And lastly, it has been thought by pious writers that our Merciful LORD wished to spare this poor Woman the pang of conscience which a stolen cure might have occasioned her. He therefore calls her "Daughter," in the end, ("for Faith claims the grace of Adoption;") confirms the cure He had already wrought upon her; and dismisses her with words of comfort.

33 But the Woman fearing and trembling, knowing what was done in her, came and fell down before Him, and told Him all the truth.

She may be presumed to have stated all the particulars which are found contained above, in verses 25, 26, 27, 28, 29. Compare St. Luke viii. 47. And this confession, it will be observed, was made "before all the people."(*e*)

34 And He said unto her, Daughter, thy Faith hath made thee whole; go in peace, and be whole of thy plague.

"*Thy Faith* hath made thee whole." Our LORD says not, The hem of My garment. Nay the soldiers divided His garments among them, ye inherited no blessing! Her *Faith* had made her whole; and why? because it had brought her to CHRIST.

Compare St. Luke vii. 50. See also, St. Matthew viii. 13: ix. 29.

35 While He yet spake, there came from the Ruler of the Synagogue's house certain which said, Thy Daughter is dead: why troublest thou the Master any further?

For, by this time, a long interval had elapsed. The Father had gone in quest of our SAVIOUR,—rehearsed his need,—and was bringing those blessed footsteps, slowly and painfully, (because attended by a mighty crowd,) in the direction of his own dwelling. See the end of the note on ver. 24. In the meantime, a considerable incident had occurred.

Consider what a heavy trial of the Father's Faith our LORD's delay must have been! Such a message as Jairus now heard, was the thing he dreaded most: for how little can he have suspected the Love which was wrapping him round, all the while; the Almighty Wisdom which had planned this vexatious delay,—not in order to distress him; but, in order to procure for him thereby a more exceeding amount of blessedness! . . . See the note on verse 24; and observe what follows:

36 As soon as JESUS heard the word that was spoken, He saith unto the Ruler of the Synagogue, Be not afraid, only believe.

The SAVIOUR stretches out His arm to sustain the sinking faith of the Father the instant the words of grief were spoken,—as when St. Peter's faith failed him, on the water.(*f*) He could work no miracle where there was unbelief, as we are expressly told in another place: St. Mark vi. 5.

"Be not afraid,—only believe." *That* is the one condition necessary; but "without Faith," as "it is impossible to please Him,"(*g*) so it is impossible to obtain a blessing from Him, either.

Our Blessed LORD added the promise,—"she shall be made whole:"(*h*) and the Father believed that it would be as the Great Physician promised. Surely, the miracle which he witnessed by the way, was a mighty argument; a timely, and a most powerful, confirmation of his Faith!

37 And He suffered no man to follow Him, save Peter, and James, and John the brother of James.

That is, CHRIST suffered no one of His Disciples to enter the House, but these three. We shall find that, into the Chamber of Death, "the Father and the Mother of the Damsel" were besides permitted to enter. See ver. 40.

How highly favoured were the three Disciples here named! It was they who witnessed the Transfiguration of CHRIST:(*i*) with Andrew, on the Mount of Olives, they heard our LORD deliver His wondrous Prophecy concerning the destruction of

(*e*) St. Luke viii. 47.

(*h*) St. Luke viii. 50.

(*f*) St. Matth. xiv. 31.

(*i*) St. Matth. xxvii. 1.

(*g*) Hebrews xi. 6.

Jerusalem, and the end of the World :(*k*) and it was they who were chosen to watch with Him during the hour of His mysterious Agony in the Garden.(*l*)

Take notice that it was only on these three Apostles that our Lord bestowed *surnames*. See St. John i. 42. St. Matthew xvi. 18. Also, St. Mark iii. 16 and 17 : on which two places see the notes.

38 And He cometh to the house of the Ruler of the Synagogue, and seeth the tumult, and them that wept and wailed greatly.

These were the hired mourners,—chiefly females, whose business it was to make loud lamentations at funerals. There were also “minstrels” present, who were hired to deepen the expression of sorrow. See the note on St. Matthew ix. 23.

There are many allusions to this ancient Jewish custom in the Old Testament. See 2 Chronicles xxxv. 25 : Jeremiah ix. 17, 18 ; and Amos v. 16.—The poorest Israelite, in the time of our Lord, lamented his deceased wife with two pipers and one mourning woman. A Ruler of the Synagogue,—bereaved of his only child,—may well have been prodigal in the expression of his grief!

39 And when He was come in, He saith unto them, Why make ye this ado, and weep? the Damsel is not dead, but sleepeth.

And so He spoke, when He was about to raise Lazarus from the grave where he had been four days lying: “Our friend Lazarus *sleepeth*; but I go that I may *awaken him out of sleep*.”(*m*) “Howbeit, *JESUS* spake of his *death* ;” and it was the sleep of Death of which He spake, on both occasions.(*n*) On *this*.—Mercy may have dictated the choice of language which, by its ambiguity, served both to sustain the drooping Faith of the parents, and to shelter the unbelief of the noisy assembly.

We gather from all this, that to the mind of CHRIST, dead men are but sleepers, waiting “until the Day dawn, and the Day-star arise.”(*o*) In this word, therefore, is contained the Doctrine of the Resurrection; and it is not peculiar to the Gospel, but is of frequent occurrence in the Old Testament Scriptures also: See Deut. xxxi. 16. Job vii. 21. 1 Kings i. 21 : ii. 10. (Acts xiii. 36.) Psalm iii. 5, and iv. 8 : also xiii. 3. Jeremiah li. 39, 57. Daniel xii. 2, &c.

40 And they laughed Him to scorn.

“Knowing that she was dead,”—as St. Luke(*p*) relates. And thus their very unbelief turns to God’s Glory; for the greatness of the Miracle which followed, was thereby established.

But when He had put them all out, He taketh the Father and the Mother of the Damsel, and them that were with Him,

Namely, Peter, and the two sons of Zebedee. See ver. 37. So that there were *seven* in the Chamber of Death. If three only of the Apostolic body were able to witness the spectacle which was to follow,—how could the presence of the *scorners* be endured? The persons whom our Lord put out cannot have been in a fit temper of mind to witness so exceedingly solemn a transaction.

and entereth in where the Damsel was lying.

Thither, it is not hard in thought to follow them. The shrill clamour had been suddenly silenced, and the mourners put forth from the dwelling; all was silent as the Maiden whose Spirit had so lately left her, and beside whose funeral bier stood the wondering, weeping Parents. Three holy men were the chosen witnesses of what followed, when the Lord of Life took that unconscious hand in His; and spoke the two prevailing words which called the wondering Spirit back to its frail tenement.

41 And He took the Damsel by the hand, and said unto her, Talitha cumi; which is, being interpreted, Damsel, (I say unto thee,) arise.

(*k*) St. Mark xiii. 3.

(*m*) St. John xi. 11.

(*o*) 2 St. Peter i. 19.

(*l*) St. Matth. xxvi. 37.

(*n*) St. Luke viii. 53, and St. John xi. 14.

(*p*) St. Luke viii. 53.

Observe, St. Mark alone records *the very words* of Syriac which our LORD employed on this occasion. So, it is he who preserves the very word with which our SAVIOUR opened the eyes of the blind man,—*Ephphatha*.(q) See the first note on St. Mark i.

It was with just such a summons that the Widow of Nain's son was raised from death. See St. Luke vii. 14.

42 And straightway the Damsel arose, and walked; for she was of *the age* of twelve years. And they were astonished with a great astonishment.

"Her Spirit came again," as St. Luke relates.(r) Whereupon, she not only "arose," observe, but "*walked*" also. Moreover, she required meat: see the next verse. Here, then, was a double miracle; as was explained in the note on the latter part of St. Mark i. 31.

43 And He charged them straitly that no man should know it; and commanded that something should be given her to eat.

See what has been already said on the subject of this command in the notes on St. Mark i. 44, 45, and St. Matthew ix. 30, 31. See also the first note on St. Matth. viii. 4.

The charge here spoken of, was delivered to the parents,—as we learn from St. Luke viii. 56.

Consider the following texts,—St. Luke xxiv. 41. St. John xii. 1, 2: xxi. 5. Acts x. 41.

And here, a veil is drawn over the sacred narrative; and we may but meditate on the gratitude and joy which followed. Perhaps our LORD foresaw that it would be so excessive as even to endanger the boon which He had bestowed. But whatever the motive of this last minute injunction may have been, His command that something should be given the maiden to eat, will be felt to constitute a most affecting circumstance. It proves that *nothing* is little in the sight of God. At one instant, His voice recalls a departed Spirit; at the very next, it is employed to provide for the cravings of a child!

The Reader will find it repay his labour to refer to the following texts:—Isaiah xl. 11, 12: lxvi. 1, 2. Psalm lxxviii. 4, 5: cxiii. 4, 5, 6: cxlv. 13, 14: cxlvii. 3, 4, and 5, 6.

(q) St. Mark vii. 34.

(r) St. Luke viii. 55.

THE PRAYER.

O GOD, merciful Father, that despisest not the sighing of a contrite heart, nor the desire of such as be sorrowful; mercifully assist our prayers that we make before Thee in all our troubles and adversities, whensoever they oppress us; and graciously hear us, that those evils, which the craft and subtilty of the Devil or man worketh against us, be brought to nought; and by the Providence of Thy Goodness they may be dispersed; that we Thy servants, being hurt by no persecutions, may evermore give thanks unto Thee in Thy holy Church; through JESUS CHRIST our LORD. Amen.

CHAPTER VI.

1 CHRIST is contemned of His countrymen. 7 He giveth the Twelve power over unclean spirits. 14 Divers opinions of CHRIST. 27 John Baptist is beheaded, 29 and buried. 30 The Apostles return from preaching. 34 The miracle of five loaves and two fishes. 48 CHRIST walketh on the sea: 53 and healeth all that touch Him.

1 AND He went out from thence, and came into His own country; and His Disciples follow Him.

But *why* did our LORD thus leave Capernaum for Nazareth? It was, doubtless, to escape the importunity of the people. Some of His mighty acts had got abroad at this very juncture; and the celebrity which they immediately acquired was such as to render His continuance in the city impossible. The ensuing narrative corresponds with that in St. Matthew xiii. 54 to 58: where the notes may be also consulted.

2 And when the Sabbath day was come, He began to teach in the Synagogue: and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, From whence hath this *Man* these things? and what wisdom is this which is given unto Him, that even such mighty works are wrought by His hands?

"What Wisdom!"—and "Such mighty Works!" We are left to infer how un-earthly the Wisdom,—how marvellous the Works must have been, from the wonder which they produced. Nothing whatever is revealed to us concerning either. Take notice, however, (for we should not let such things escape us,) that we have here another of the many traces that this was He of whom the Prophet exclaimed,—*"Thou art fairer than the children of men: full of Grace are Thy lips!"*(a) In the same synagogue, once before, all "bare him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth."(b) "Never man spake like this man," was the confession of his Enemies.(c) See the last note on St. Matthew vii.

3 Is not this the Carpenter, the Son of Mary, the Brother of James, and Josès, and of Juda, and Simon? and are not his Sisters here with us? And they were offended at Him.

"The Carpenter!" Yea,—who hath builded His House, and hewn out his seven pillars!(d) who hath builded his stories in the Heaven,(e) and laid the beams of his chambers in the Waters!(f) who set a compass upon the face of the depth:(g) who laid the measures of the Earth, and stretched the line upon it, and fastened the foundations, and laid the corner-stone thereof; when the Morning-Stars sang together, and all the Sons of God shouted for joy!(h) The LORD, the God of Hosts, is His Name.(i)

Save in this one place, our SAVIOUR is nowhere *Himself* called "the Carpenter." Joseph was, probably, by this time dead. Concerning "the Brethren" of CHRIST, (James and Josès, Juda and Simon,) and the "Sisters," whose names are nowhere

(a) Psalm xlv. 3.

(d) Prov. ix. 1.

(g) Prov. viii. 27.

(b) St. Luke iv. 22.

(e) Amos ix. 6.

(h) Job xxxviii. 5 to 7.

(c) St. John vii. 46.

(f) Psalm civ. 3.

(i) Amos iv. 13.

recorded, but who were all our LORD's *cousins*,—enough has been already written in the notes on St. Matthew xiii. 55, and on St. Mark iii. 31. The note on St. Matthew xii. 47 may be also consulted.

In explanation of the last words of the preceding verse, see the note on St. Matthew xi. 6.

4 But JESUS said unto them, A Prophet is not without honour, but in his own country, and among his own kin, and in his own house.

Perhaps it was in order to remind them of their former mistaken treatment of Him, that he now repeats to them almost the same proverb which he had once before used, and from the same place."*(k)* And Human Unbelief is mighty enough to thrust away—or rather, to disable—Divine Love: for, as it follows,—

5 And He could there do no mighty work, save that He laid His hands upon a few sick folk, and healed *them*.

St. Matthew says that "He did *not many* mighty works;"*(l)* and St. Mark, in his concluding words, allows that He did *some*. Compare, also, the language of ver. 2. But take notice that He *could not do* as many as He would have done, because of the unbelief of the people. . . . How awful is the thought that we have in our hands the means of frustrating God's most gracious designs towards ourselves! That on *us* depends the limits of *His* power! . . . "How often would I! . . . *and ye would not!*"*(m)*—said He of the inhabitants of the Holy City.—"Fear not: believe only!"*(n)* was His injunction to the father and mother of the dead maiden: for, had the parents doubted, He could have done for them no mighty work. "If thou canst do anything," exclaimed the father of the lunatic child, "have compassion on us, and help us!"—"If thou canst believe," was the reply, "all things are possible!"*(o)* . . . It hath ever been: it will ever be so!

Very striking are the words which follow; reminding us that He was "very Man:"

6 And He marvelled because of their unbelief.

With how brief a notice does the Evangelist proceed to dispatch a Great Ministerial Journey!

And He went round about the villages, teaching.

A long interval of time must here be supposed to have elapsed. We next behold the SAVIOUR directing his apostles to go forth for the first time *alone*, (that is, without Him,) and to make personal proof of their Ministry.

7 And He called *unto Him* the Twelve, and began to send them forth by two and two; and gave them power over unclean spirits:

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who mentions that He sent them forth "by two and two." The circumstance will be found to be full of surprise and instruction, when it is considered that the very occasion of the Mission of the Apostles here recorded, was the plenteousness of the Harvest,—the mighty extent of the Flock without a Shepherd among whom they were to be sent. The Harvest, truly, was plenteous; yea, and the labourers were few:*(p)* yet was the LORD of the Harvest pleased, when he sent forth his scanty band of labourers, to send them forth *in pairs*.

"Two are better than one," saith the Preacher, "because they have a good reward for their labour. For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up."*(q)* Moreover, it had been proclaimed from the beginning, that "it is not good that Man should be alone."*(r)* This, therefore, "was ordained for the mutual society, help, and comfort, that the one ought to have of the other, both in prosperity and adversity,"—as is said in the Marriage-service.

(k) St. Luke iv. 24.

(l) St. Matth. xiii. 58.

(m) St. Matthew xxiii. 37.

(n) St. Luke viii. 50.

(o) St. Mark ix. 22, 23.

(p) St. Matthew ix. 36 to 38.

(q) Ecclesiastes iv. 9, 10. See also verses 11 and 12.

(r) Genesis ii. 18.

What follows is a brief summary of the Charge which their LORD proceeded to deliver to them on this occasion: more fully given, and at far greater length, in St. Matthew's Gospel,—chap. x. 5 to 42. He gave His Apostles "power over unclean spirits,"—

8, 9 And commanded them that they should take nothing for *their* journey, save a staff only; no scrip, no bread, no money in *their* purse: but *be* shod with sandals; and not put on two coats.

10, 11 And He said unto them, In what place soever ye enter into an house, there abide till ye depart from that place. And whosoever shall not receive you, nor hear you, when ye depart thence, shake off the dust under your feet for a testimony against them. Verily I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrha in the Day of Judgment, than for that city.

The Reader is referred to what has been already briefly offered on this subject in the notes on St. Matthew x. 9 to 15. None can doubt that the reason of the injunctions which both the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy Disciples(s) received from their LORD was, in part, what appears on the surface: namely, that they might be thereby persuaded to cast their care upon God,—and that the unearthliness of their errand might thereby become the more apparent to all—and that they might the more effectually preach to others self-denial and contempt of riches, by showing their own utter disregard of the common comforts of life. And yet, over and above all this, there was certainly a far deeper teaching conveyed; as will be also found hinted in the notes on St. Matthew x. 10, and St. Luke x. 4. Again, (as the great Father of the West has observed,) "Whosoever thinks that the LORD could not in the same discourse say some things figuratively, others in a literal sense, let him look into His other discourses; and he will see how rash and ignorant is his judgment."

12, 13 And they went out, and preached that men should repent. And they cast out many devils, and anointed with oil many that were sick, and healed *them*.

St. Mark alone it is who mentions the circumstance that anointing with oil was the *method* whereby the healing of the sick was effected by the Apostles: for this, our LORD is not found to have given any express order; but it was doubtless considered to have been fully implied by His general direction that they should "heal the sick."(*t*) The same form of cure was prescribed, about thirty years later, by St. James, in his General Epistle.(*u*)

And now, the Apostles having gone forth on their holy errand, their Divine Master took His Third Great Ministerial Journey, alone,—as St. Matthew specially relates:(*x*) from every village therefore which He blessed with His presence, some tale of wonder, (the only tales whose marvellousness *could* not be enhanced by description!) some token of powers more than human, must have daily found its way to the ears of Herod Antipas, the Tetrarch, (or "King," as St. Mark calls him,) of Galilee. As it follows:

14 And king Herod heard of *Him*; (for His name was spread abroad:) and he said, That John the Baptist was risen from the dead, and therefore mighty works do show forth themselves in him.

This was a marvellous suspicion for Herod to have been surprised into,—himself, by profession, a Sadducee:(*y*) and therefore a disbeliever in the Resurrection of the Body, and in spiritual natures. This has been also pointed out in the note on St. Matthew xiv. 2. See how Herod repeats his conviction, lower down, in verse 16.

15, 16 Others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets. But when Herod heard *thereof*, he said, It is John, whom I beheaded: he is risen from the dead.

(*) St. Luke x.

(x) St. Matthew xi. 1.

(t) St. Matthew x. 8.

(y) Compare St. Matth. xvi. 6, with St. Mark viii. 15.

(u) St. James v. 14.

St. Mark proceeds, and with far greater fullness than St. Matthew,^(z) to relate the circumstances of the Baptist's murder.

17, 18 For Herod himself had sent forth and laid hold upon John, and bound him in prison for Herodias' sake, his brother Philip's wife: for he had married her. For John had said unto Herod, It is not lawful for thee to have thy brother's wife.

The History here goes back, two full years; during which the Baptist has been lying in the dungeon of Machærus. *His* imprisonment, indeed, had been the event from which the Ministry of our Blessed Lord dated its first commencement:^(a) and the occasion of that act of cruelty is here recorded. Herod Antipas having taken Herodias, the wife of his brother Philip, John Baptist had denounced the sin of his royal master. And observe, that in so doing he brought no "railing accusation"^(b) against the King. It was, however, a faithful and most fearless witness.

19, 20 Therefore Herodias had a quarrel against him, and would have killed him: but she could not; for Herod feared John, knowing that he was a just man and an holy, and observed him; and when he heard him, he did many things, and heard him gladly.

The sense of the original is lost in this place by the translation. St. Mark says that Herodias would have procured the Baptist's death, if she could; but she could not,—for Herod "feared John, . . . and kept him safe." The Evangelist adds a very striking circumstance; namely, that there had been a time when to listen to the Baptist's preaching was a delight to Herod. His exhortations had sometimes even disposed the Tetrarch to acts of obedience; and those not few in number. But Herod had entered on a career of sin; and the pathway of such ever "goeth down to the chambers of Death."^(c)

21, 22, 23 And when a convenient day was come, that Herod on his birthday made a supper to his lords, high captains, and chief *estates* of Galilee; and when the daughter of the said Herodias came in, and danced, and pleased Herod and them that sat with him, the King said unto the damsel, Ask of me whatsoever thou wilt, and I will give it thee. And he swear unto her, Whatsoever thou shalt ask of me, I will give it thee, unto the half of my Kingdom.

It is hard to realize the infatuation of Herod,—thus captivated by the graceful movements of a girl who stood to himself in almost a filial relation. Salome, who danced before him and his nobles, was the daughter of Herodias by her former marriage; and therefore niece to the King, who, like Ahasuerus of old, is ready to barter away half his Kingdom at her bidding.^(d)

24, 25 And she went forth, and said unto her Mother, What shall I ask? And she said, The head of John the Baptist. And she came in straightway with haste unto the King, and asked, saying, I will that thou give me by and by in a charger the head of John the Baptist.

Observe how ready, and how earnest is the adulteress with her request. "Give me *here*,"—"by and by,"—(that is, "*immediately*,")—"in a charger." She had settled in her mind exactly *how* she would have her revenge. The damsel, we read, entered "straightway, with haste" into the King's presence. But surely the daughter can hardly have been so depraved as to carry such an inhuman message with *alacrity*! Her haste must doubtless exhibit her mother's urgency rather than her own impatience. From all these hints, then, we seem to gather a secret. Herod had doubtless been a stranger to peace,—although he had been enjoying the pleasures of sin, unmolested by the presence of the only man who had dared to re-

(z) St. Matthew xiv. 3 to 12.

(a) See the notes on St. Matth. iv. 12, and on St. Mark i. 14.

(b) St. Jude, verse 9.

(c) Proverbs vii. 27.

(d) See Esther vii. 2.

buke him for it. Less hardened than the partner of his crime, it was no satisfaction to him that he had silenced the Baptist. A reproachful conscience interfered with his guilty joy. He could not forget "the Voice of one crying in the Wilderness, Prepare ye the way of the Lord." Notwithstanding his sinful course,—notwithstanding his having shut up John in prison,—Herod yet had a wakeful conscience; and remorse, while it poisoned his existence, must have embittered that of Herodias also. *This* seems the true way of accounting for the promptness,—the bitterness,—the unrelenting cruelty of that guilty woman.

"*The head of John the Baptist*"—"in a charger!" Her intention, therefore, was to look upon the gory mangled neck, and to hold the lifeless head in her hands. That eye, beneath whose living glance she had so often quailed, she desires to behold quenched in death: those lips, whose language had so often disturbed the current of her guilty joy, she desires to know silent and motionless. Softness and luxury, instead of excluding cruelty, must surely be closely allied to it. How often are cruelty and lust found to go hand in hand! (c)

26 And the King was exceeding sorry: yet for his oath's sake, and for their sakes which sat with him, he would not reject her.

Take notice how the Laws of Nature and the Laws of God are set aside, at once, in order to make way for the fancied Laws of Honour. The Evangelist, however, says all he can for Herod. He was "exceeding sorry."

27, 28 And immediately the King sent an executioner, and commanded his head to be brought. And he went and beheaded him in the prison; and brought his head in a charger, and gave it to the damsel: and the damsel gave it to her Mother.

The scene of the murder was close at hand: for, as already explained, John Baptist was a prisoner in the very castle where Herod Antipas at this time resided,—a strong border fortress built by the Tetrarch's father, and containing a royal Palace. The Baptist's Disciples had been allowed access to their Master during the period of his confinement at Machærus,—as the narrative in St. Luke vii. 18, 19, sufficiently proves. Accordingly, when tidings of his murder reach them, they are enabled to perform the last offices of love to his body: as it follows,—

29 And when his Disciples heard of it, they came and took up his corpse, and laid it in a tomb.

What torture of mind followed upon this crime, in Herod's case, may be inferred from the sayings recorded of him in verses 14 and 16. The murder had been quite recent; and a wakeful conscience, at the first mention of supernatural powers, can behold in their possessor none other than the murdered Saint restored to life!

The reader is referred to a long note on this entire transaction in the Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel,—chap. ix. 9.

30 And the Apostles gathered themselves together unto JESUS, and told Him all things, both what they had done, and what they had taught.

The Twelve, having completed their Ministerial Journey, returned to Capernaum, where they find their Lord; and render to Him an account of their Stewardship. The Disciples of John repair to the same place, and pour into the same ears the history of the Baptist's murder. (f) But multitudes of persons (as might have been foreseen,) had followed the Apostles to Capernaum, from the several cities which they had so recently blessed with their presence: a circumstance which will explain what is stated in the next verse.

31, 32 And He said unto them, Come ye yourselves apart into a desert place, and rest a while: for there were many coming and going, and they had no leisure so much as to eat. And they departed into a desert place by ship privately.

(c) Consider especially 2 Samuel xi. 15 and 27.

(f) St Matth. xiv. 12, 13.

They crossed the Sea of Galilee, (as St. John relates,) (*g*) proceeding in the direction of the City of Bethsaida. (*h*) For there were two cities of that name: one, situated on the Western side of the Lake, near Capernaum: the other, at the North-Eastern corner. The people, in the meantime, are to be understood to have ran along the coast,—rounded the northern extremity of the Lake,—and gained the intended place of disembarkation, before the Blessed Company had themselves reached the shore. For “they departed,” as it is written,—

33, 34 And the people saw them departing, and many knew Him, and ran afoot thither out of all cities, and outwent them, and came together unto Him.. And JESUS, when He came out, saw much people, and was moved with compassion toward them, because they were as sheep not having a shepherd: and He began to teach them many things.

The unshepherded condition of the people had already moved the compassion of “the Great Shepherd of the sheep,” (*i*)—when He was on the point of sending out His Apostles. (*k*) What a pattern of Ministerial zeal does He here display for our imitation! On disembarking from the ship, He beholds the lonely part of the coast to which He had proposed betaking Himself with the Twelve, crowded with people. Fasting and weary as He was, He yet “received them,” as St. Luke relates, (*l*)—that is, gave them a kind and gracious reception; and “began to teach them many things,” both speaking to them concerning the Kingdom of God, and healing them that had need of healing. (*m*)

35, 36 And when the day was now far spent, His Disciples came unto Him, and said, This is a desert place, and now the time is far passed: send them away, that they may go into the country round about, and into the villages, and buy themselves bread: for they have nothing to eat.

From which it appears that our SAVIOUR'S Discourse had been exceedingly prolonged; so that these men, from hunger and thirst after Righteousness, had become sensible of bodily need likewise. He was about to prove, by an actual instance, that to those who make the Kingdom of God and His Righteousness the first object of their pursuit, all these things shall be added. (*n*) But, observe, He works not the miracle until the twelve have become fully aroused to the urgency of the case, and its apparent hopelessness. He even creates perplexity, and thus makes them doubly watchful and attentive, before He advances a single step in what He was about to do: as it follows,—

37 He answered and said unto them, Give ye them to eat. And they say unto Him, Shall we go and buy two hundred pennyworth of bread; and give them to eat?

Revealing by those words, as it appears, the utmost extent of the sum of money,—(about eight pounds sterling,)—with which they were provided. The saying seems to have been first heard on the lips of St. Philip. See, by all means, how St. John has related the entire incident,—chap. vi. 5 to 7. The Reader is also referred to the note on St. Luke ix. 13, 14. . . . In answer to the inquiry of the Disciples just recorded,—

38 He saith unto them, How many loaves have ye? go and see. And when they knew, they say, Five, and two fishes.

St. John relates that “one of His Disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, saith unto Him, There is a lad here which hath five barley loaves, and two small fishes; but what are they among so many?” (*o*)

(*g*) St. John vi. 1.

(*h*) St. Matth. ix. 36.

(*m*) St. Luke ix. 11. See also St. Matth. xiv. 14.

(*k*) St. Luke ix. 10.

(*l*) St. Luke ix. 11.

(*o*) St. John vi. 9.

(*i*) Hebrews xiii. 20.

(*n*) St. Matth. vi. 33.

39, 40 And He commanded them to make all sit down by companies upon the green grass. And they sat down in ranks, by hundreds, and by fifties.

St. Mark alone it is who mentions "the *green grass*," whereon the multitude reposed. His phrase, descriptive of their sitting "in ranks," (or rather, "*in groups*,") is also striking and picturesque. It denotes that those companies of men were disposed *like garden-beds* upon the waste.

"There was *much grass* in the place," says St. John. It was in fact the season of the Passover, (*p*) which was celebrated in the first month of the year; corresponding with our March or April.

41 And when He had taken the five loaves and the two fishes, He looked up to Heaven, and blessed,

"He looked up to Heaven, and blessed:" that is, He prefaced the meal with prayer; and this act of His becomes our warrant and example for invoking the Divine Blessing, and giving thanks, on all similar occasions.

But the incident thus recorded suggests a further remark: namely, that as our SAVIOUR showed His *equality* with the FATHER by working His Miracles generally with authority and power, so does He teach that He is *from* the FATHER by sometimes referring to *Him* what He does, and calling upon Him with prayer. See more in the second note on St. Mark vii. 34. . . . He "blessed," therefore,—

and brake the loaves, and gave *them* to His Disciples to set before them; and the two fishes divided He among them all.

It is particularly noticed by all the four Evangelists, (*q*) that our LORD distributed to His Apostles, and the Apostles to the multitude. Thereby (as some have remarked,) He not only honoured them, but impressed this miracle the more deeply upon their minds and memories. The incident was besides emblematic of the office of the Ministers of CHRIST; which is, to be the instruments of God's bounty; the channels by which He is pleased to convey spiritual food to mankind,—faint and weary in the World's Wilderness, as hath been more fully pointed out in the note on St. Mark viii. 7.

42 And they did all eat and were filled.

"Let us reflect a little here," says an ancient Father. "Inasmuch as God is not visible to the eye, and the miracles of the Divine Government of the World, and ordering of the whole Creation, are overlooked in consequence of their constancy,—God hath reserved to Himself certain acts, out of the established course and order of Nature, to be done at suitable times; in order that those who overlook the daily course of Nature, may be roused to wonder by the sight of what is different from, though not at all greater, than what they are used to. The Government of the World is a mightier miracle than the satisfying of the hunger of five thousand with five loaves; yet it creates no wonder. The miraculous feeding excited such great wonder because it was so entirely strange and uncommon."

43 And they took up twelve baskets full of the fragments, and of the fishes.

"Twelve baskets,"—because each of the Apostles, (in pursuance of the command of their LORD,) (*r*) assisted in gathering up the fragments that remained, that nothing might be lost. Notice St. Mark's exactness:—the baskets were full of "the fragments," and "*of the fishes*;" for we speak of fragments *of bread*, but not *of fish*.—See more in the note on St. Matthew xiv. 20.

Bishop Sanderson remarks that as "the grain bringeth increase, not when it lieth on a heap, in the garner, but by scattering upon the land; and as the Widow's oil increased, not in the vessel, but by pouring out; and as the barley bread multiplied, not in the whole loaf, but by *breaking* and *distributing*;" so are spiritual graces best improved,—not by keeping them together, but by distributing them

(*p*) St. John vi. 4 and 10.

(*q*) St. Matthew xiv. 19; St. Luke ix. 16; St. John vi. 11.

(*r*) St. John vi. 12.

abroad."—A similar remark by another writer, will be found quoted in the note on St. Matthew xiv. 20.

44 And they that did eat of the loaves were about five thousand men.

It seems impossible to overrate the solemnity and importance of the two miracles of feeding recorded in the Gospels;(s) or to dwell with too reverent attention on the details, (doubtless all of the highest signifiency,) of either. Our SAVIOUR Himself, subsequently, called the special attention of the Disciples to those details: "When I brake the five loaves among the five thousand, how many baskets [of a certain kind] took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets [of a different kind] full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven."(t) He reproached them "for having been so slow to apprehend the meaning of this and the other feeding,—that," (in the words of a great living writer,) "something more than common bread was denoted by the food imparted, and the baskets that remained."

45 And straightway He constrained His Disciples to get into the ship, and to go to the other side before unto Bethsaida, while He sent away the people.

From this intimation of "constraint" employed by our LORD, it is evident that the Apostles left him with reluctance. They had been restored to His society only on that very day, and they are already compelled to leave Him! Add to this, that the wind was contrary, and the waters of the lake troubled. In the meantime, He is desirous of "*sending away* the people;" which seems to refer to some solemn act of blessing, which He was wont to practise on such occasions. See the note on St. Matthew xiv. 22.

46 And when He had sent them away, He departed into a mountain to pray.

"Dismissing His Disciples, and eluding the carnal-minded multitudes, He retires for private prayer to a mount apart, to add one vigil more of fasting and devotion to a life perpetually offered up in sacrifice to His FATHER for the sin and madness of mankind."

Which act of His, (says an ancient writer,) "you should refer not to Him who fed five thousand on five loaves, but to Him who on hearing of John's death withdrew into the desert: not that we may separate the LORD's person into two parts, but that His actions are divided between the God and the Man."

47, 48 And when even was come, the ship was in the midst of the sea, and He alone on the land. And He saw them toiling in rowing; for the wind was contrary unto them.

He has ascended up on high; and His Disciples, deprived of His presence, are "tossed with waves:"(u)—*they*, in the midst of the sea, toiling; *He*, alone on the shore, engaged in prayer. Meantime, He sees their distress, yet comes not to their assistance. Nay, when at last, (in a marvellous manner,) He draws near, His presence proves only the signal for their terror: for "His way is in the sea, and His path is in the great waters, and His footsteps are not known."(x) But alarm quickly passes away. The shadows are already departing. CHRIST discovers Himself to His people. Thereupon, the violence of the storm abates; and the weary crew are at the haven where they would be! . . . How natural does the history of the entire transaction run into the language of allegory! It is indeed, clearly, a symbolical history throughout. This does not mean that the history is not real and true; but that it is *Divine*.

(s) For the other, see St. Matth. xv. 32 to 39; St. Mark viii. 1 to 9.

(t) St. Mark viii. 19, 20; compare St. Matthew xvi. 9, 10. Concerning the different kinds of baskets, see the note on St. Mark viii. 8.

(u) St. Matthew xiv. 24.

(x) Psalm lxxvii. 19.

And about the fourth watch of the night He cometh unto them, walking upon the Sea;

They had now rowed, St. John says, "about five and twenty, or thirty furlongs:"^(y) so that, at the end of upwards of six hours, the Apostles had not got more than four miles on their way: that is, they had about half crossed the Lake:—a singular proof of the implicit obedience, the resolution and patience, with which they were fulfilling their Lord's injunction that they should go before Him to the other side. See the note on St. Matthew xiv. 24. It is added, that, in the midst of their perplexity, our Lord Himself appeared,—

and would have passed by them.

Consider, that He would have passed by Abraham also: but—"Pass not away, I pray Thee, from Thy servant,"^(z) was the Patriarch's entreaty. "Let Me go, for the day breaketh," He said to Jacob: but Israel answered, "I will not let Thee go, except Thou bless Me."^(a) Gideon, like Abraham, was led to exclaim, "Depart not hence, I pray Thee!" "And He said, I will tarry until thou come again."^(b) Even so cried Manoa and his wife,—*"I pray Thee, let us detain Thee!"*^(c) And is it not recorded of Him that *"He made as though He would have gone further,"* when He had walked with the two Disciples as far as Emmaus; "but they constrained Him, saying, Abide with us?"^(d) He will ever have us thus retain Him with an effort and an entreaty; or He will pass on.

49, 50 But when they saw Him walking upon the sea, they supposed it had been a spirit, and cried out: for they all saw Him, and were troubled.

So "terrified and affrighted" were they, "and supposed that they had seen a Spirit," when, on the evening of the first Easter, "Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you!"^(e)—The Reader is here requested to read the note on St. Matthew xiv. 26.

And immediately He talked with them, and saith unto them, Be of good cheer: it is I; be not afraid.

Almost obvious is the remark which suggests itself on these blessed words of comfort. But what has been already offered (in a note on St. Matthew xiv. 27,) must not be repeated here.

Thereupon followed the miraculous walking on the water by Simon Peter. St. Mark deriving his materials, (under the Inspiration and guidance of the HOLY SPIRIT,) from that Apostle, takes no notice of an event so unspeakably honourable to him, and glorious;—which very silence of the Evangelist, by the way, should be a rebuke to those of the moderns who fix their eyes, somewhat exclusively, on the "doubt" of the Apostle,—that doubt which caused that his "feet were almost gone;" his "treadings had well nigh slipt:"^(f) instead of seeing in the entire transaction, evidence, rather, of that glorious Faith which could "move Mountains!"

51, 52 And He went up unto them into the ship; and the wind ceased: and they were sore amazed in themselves beyond measure, and wondered. For they considered not *the miracle* of the loaves: for their heart was hardened.

Not wilfully "hardened;" but slow of belief, and dull in the apprehension of Divine things: "*slow of heart to believe,*" as it is expressed in another place.^(g)

St. Matthew will be found here to supply a circumstance which St. Mark omits,—the manner, namely, in which that little ship's company expressed their wonder

(y) St. John vi. 19.

(b) Judges vi. 18.

(c) St. Luke xxiv. 36, 37.

(g) St. Luke xxiv. 25. Compare St. Mark xvi. 14.

(z) Genesis xviii. 3.

(e) Judges xiii. 15.

(a) Genesis xxxii. 26.

(d) St. Luke xxiv. 28, 29.

(f) Psalm lxxiii. 2.

and amazement. See St. Matthew xiv. 32, 33, and the notes there. But they had already reached the Western side of the Lake:—

53, 54, 55 And when they had passed over, they came into the land of Gennesaret, and drew to the shore. And when they were come out of the ship, straightway they knew Him; and ran through that whole region round about, and began to carry about in beds those that were sick, where they heard He was.

The concluding verse of the present chapter clearly discovers to us the Great Physician making the circuit of some part of Galilee. Having intimated that many acts of mercy ensued immediately after our Lord's disembarkation from the ship, the Evangelist proceeds,—

56 And whithersoever He entered, into villages, or cities, or country, they laid the sick in the streets, and besought Him that they might touch if it were but the border of His garment: and as many as touched Him were made whole.

For the unction of the Spirit,—a faint type of which was supplied by the precious ointment wherewith the garments of the High Priest were anointed,—“went down to the skirts of His clothing:” and CHRIST is our Great High Priest,—in whom all the shadows of the Law find their fulfillment. See more in the last note on St. Matthew xiv.

Who can read the concluding words of the present chapter without emotion? No one, surely, who studies the Gospel with a heart at all alive to the deep practical teaching, the high spiritual consolation, which is constantly vouchsafed beneath the written letter. What mean, for instance, these frequent notices of our Lord's Miracles of Healing?—what higher purpose is thereby served,—than to remind us that He is no less mighty to relieve all those *Spiritual* ailments, of which *Bodily* maladies are but types or symbols? And if, as was shown in our note on St. Mark v. 31, *the Touch of Faith* it be,—(a touch which may be given when we approach Him in Prayer, or in any other way of His appointing,)—if this alone it be which is needed in order to draw healing grace from the person of our SAVIOUR CHRIST,—how blessed is the assurance of the text, that not for one or two faithful hearts alone is it reserved thus to touch Him and live, *(h)* but that “*as many as touch Him,*”—as many as will touch “*but the border of His garment,*”—shall be “made whole.”

(h) Alluding to the case of the Woman with the Issue of Blood,—See St. Mark v. 27 to 29; St. Luke viii. 43 to 44.

CHAPTER VII.

1 *The Pharisees find fault at the Disciples for eating with unwashed hands.* 8 *They break the Commandment of God by the Traditions of Men.* 14 *Meat defileth not the man.* 24 *He healeth the Syrophenician woman's Daughter of an unclean spirit,* 31 *and one that was deaf, and stammered in his speech.*

1, 2 THEN came together unto Him the Pharisees, and certain of the Scribes, which came from Jerusalem. And when they saw some of

His Disciples eat bread with defiled, that is to say, with unwashen, hands, they found fault.

The first eight verses of the present Chapter will be found far more briefly given in the earlier Gospel of St. Matthew,—xv. 1, 2. The only purpose of either Evangelist, however, in this place, is to set forth the fact, that the memorable Discourse which follows, was delivered by our Lord on the occasion of certain evils brought against His Disciples by some of the most learned of the Nation, who “*came from Jerusalem* ;” of set purpose, as it would seem, to assail Him.

3, 4 For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, except they wash *their* hands oft, eat not, holding the tradition of the Elders. And *when they come* from the market, except they wash, they eat not. And many other things there be, which they have received to hold, *as* the washing of cups, and pots, brazen vessels, and of tables.

It will be at once perceived that the curious information contained in the last three verses was intended, in the first instance, for the satisfaction of those “*aliens from the commonwealth of Israel*,” (a) to whom the Preachers of the Gospel were in due time sent. The margin of a Reference-Bible should here be consulted.

5 Then the Pharisees and Scribes asked Him, Why walk not Thy Disciples according to the Tradition of the Elders, but eat bread with unwashen hands?

Grafting their traditional precepts upon the letter of such commands as are found in Isaiah i. 16,—“*Wash you, make you clean* ;” unmindful of those words which immediately follow,—“*put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes* :” or those of Jeremiah,—“*Wash thine heart from wickedness*, that thou mayest be saved :” (b) the Teachers of Religion among the Jews had invented a purely human system which entirely supplanted, and even subverted, the Divine Law ; making “*the Word of God of none effect*,”—as our SAVIOUR, in ver. 13, declares. Our Lord reproves them out of those very Writings, with a surprising quotation :—

6, 7 He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth Me with *their* lips, but their heart is far from Me. Howbeit in vain do they worship Me, teaching *for* Doctrines the Commandments of men.

These words are found in Isaiah xxix. 13. It is surprising to find that the Prophet was thereby prophesying of the men of our Lord’s time.

8, 9 For laying aside the Commandment of God, ye hold the Tradition of men, *as* the washing of pots and cups : and many other such like things ye do. And He said unto them, Full well ye reject the Commandment of God, that ye may keep your own Tradition.

Let us be well persuaded that the tendency of man’s heart is ever to supplant the Divine with that which is of merely human growth. The Christian Church, in some respects, presents a striking parallel with the Jewish ; and will do well, at all times, to seek a warning in the History of *that*, her elder Sister. If, in our own Branch of CHRIST’S Holy Catholic Church, we find no signs whatever of the Commandment of God rejected in favour of the Traditions of the Elders,—let us not be “*high-minded, but fear*.” (c) And “*fear*” lest we should *individually* incur the reproach which may yet not attach to us as a Church and Nation,—cannot be a groundless cause of alarm, and source of anxious inquiry. To honour God with the lips, while the heart is far from Him,—seems to be the great peril of all who inhabit a Christian Land ; especially if they happen to live in an Age when Religion is, (so to speak,) *a fashionable thing*.

Our Lord proceeds to give a specimen of the Wickedness, the sinful Blindness, of

(a) Ephes. ii. 12.

(b) Jeremiah iv. 14.

(c) Rom. xi. 20.

which He complained: taking His illustration from a breach of the first Commandment in the second Table.

10 For Moses said, Honour thy Father and thy Mother: and, Whoso curseth Father or Mother, let him die the death:

Which words are quoted partly from Exodus xx. 12, and partly from xxi. 17.—“Moses” indeed “said” this; but it was “*GOD*” who “commanded” it,—as St. Matthew expressly notices.(d)

11, 12, 13 But ye say, If a man shall say to his Father or Mother, *It is Corban*, (that is to say, a gift,) by whatsoever thou mightest be profited by me: *he shall be free*. And ye suffer him no more to do aught for his Father or his Mother: making the Word of GOD of none effect through your Tradition, which ye have delivered: and many such like things do ye.

Compare this with St. Matthew xv. 5, 6,—where it has been pointed out that the place should be rather translated,—“But ye say, If a man says to his Father or to his Mother, The thing whereby I might have benefited you, is Corban,—(that is to say, an offering which I have dedicated to God,)—he is bound to keep his vow: “and ye suffer him no longer to do aught for his Father or his Mother.”—In which words it is to be noticed that to “honour” Father and Mother, is,—in the intention of Him who gave the Commandment,—(if need be,) to “succour them;” as it is well said in the Church Catechism. And this is to be set against that saying of the Great Apostle,—“The Children ought not to lay up for the Parents, but the Parents for the Children.”(e) Which saying, by the way, manifestly contains a hint to *persons in the Ministry*: whereas our LORD’s words, (which, from the nature of the case, are to be taken in their very letter,) inform children of their duty towards their parents. ALMIGHTY GOD is, in fact, here expounding His own Commandment.

Next, the exactness of the present Evangelist in preserving *the very word* (“Corban,”) employed by our SAVIOUR, is to be noticed. See the note prefixed to the first Chapter of the present Gospel.

An ancient Commentator has explained the drift of our LORD’s rebuke so well, that we shall give it in his own words:—“The Pharisees, wishing to devour the offerings, instructed sons, when their Parents asked for some of their property, to answer them,—‘I have already offered it up to the LORD.’ Thus, the Parents would not require it: and thereby the Pharisees deceived the sons into neglecting their Parents, whilst they themselves devoured the offerings. With this, therefore, the LORD reproaches them, as transgressing the Law of GOD for the sake of gain:” and leading those astray, whose knowledge in things spiritual was committed to their care.

14, 15, 16 And when He had called all the people unto Him, He said unto them, Harken unto Me every one of you, and understand: there is nothing from without a man, that entering into him can defile him: but the things which come out of him, those are they that defile the man. If any man have ears to hear, let him hear.

Whether it was on account of these concluding words,—which imply something deep and mysterious in what went before, which men would receive or not according as their hearts were disposed(f):—or, because our LORD delivered His Doctrine with such extreme brevity, that the Disciples did not really catch its drift and meaning; we find that they regarded what had been spoken as a *Parable*,—that is, as a dark saying. Our SAVIOUR therefore proceeds to explain that the division of meats into clean and unclean, belonged to the Ceremonial Law, and was henceforth abrogated. Those carnal ordinances had served their purpose, or not, as they had taught men to look for a deeper meaning, and a *spiritual* requirement. Consider, in connection with what follows, the ensuing texts of Scripture:—Act x. 11 to 16: Romans xiv. 17: Coloss. ii. 16: 1 Tim. iv. 3 to 5: Heb. ix. 10, and xiii. 9.

(d) St. Matthew xv. 4.

(e) 2 Cor. xii. 14.

(f) See the note on St. Mark iv. 9.

17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22 And when He was entered into the house from the people, His Disciples asked Him concerning the Parable. And He saith unto them, Are ye so without understanding also? Do ye not not perceive, that whatsoever thing from without entereth into the man, it cannot defile him; because it entereth not into his heart, but into the belly, and goeth out into the draught, purging all meats? And He said, That which cometh out of the man, that defileth the man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lasciviousness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness:

"An evil eye," is an *envious, illiberal* one. So, in the parable, "Is thine eye evil, because I am good?" (*g*)—where, see the note.

Take notice that in this black catalogue, next to "Evil thoughts," come "Adulteries" and "Fornications" "Wickedness" denotes "Malignity;" and "Foolishness" is the reverse of "Sobriety."

This, then, is that "evil treasure" of the heart, concerning which our Lord speaks on a certain occasion; (*h*) out of which "an evil man bringeth,"—cannot but bring,—"evil things." The fountain-head of Sin is declared to be "evil thoughts." And the teaching of the Spirit is constant in this respect. "Keep thy heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of Life." (*i*) The reason has been pointed out long since by a pious writer:—Evil thoughts, (he says,) which are not resisted, cause delight; delight draws on consent; consent produces the act; from the act springs a habit; from a habit, necessity; and from necessity, *Death*.

23 all these evil things come from within, and defile the man.

All Sin, therefore, proceeds "*out of the heart*." Men are prone to lay the blame on external causes,—on Temptation,—on the Tempter;—and so to excuse themselves. But the Word of the Spirit is express. All this wickedness comes *from within*: is of *native* growth. Consider St. Matthew xii. 34, 35. What remains but to pray, with the Psalmist, for a "a clean *Heart*," (*k*) and for daily Renewal? (*l*)

24, 25, 26 And from thence He arose, and went into the borders of Tyre and Sidon, and entered into an house, and would have no man know it: but He could not be hid. For a *certain* Woman, whose young Daughter had an unclean spirit, heard of Him, and came and fell at His feet: (the woman was a Greek, a Syrophenician by nation :) and she besought Him that He would cast forth the devil out of her Daughter.

"Saying, Lord, help me!"—as St. Matthew relates. (*m*) The earlier Evangelist, (who addressed his Gospel especially to members of his own nation,)—calls her "a Woman of *Canaan*." See the note on St. Matthew xv. 22. Take notice, then, that here is a Woman of Canaan, "who, like Rahab (*n*) of old, is yet an inheritor of the Righteousness which is by Faith."

For the correct understanding of the present incident, the corresponding narrative in the earlier Gospel should be attentively examined; from which it will appear that the distressed Mother began by following our Blessed Lord, and His Disciples, in the way. Her importunity had been excessive; (*o*) and it would even appear as if the withdrawal "into an house," (noticed above, in verse 24,) had been effected with something like secrecy, partly in order to escape from her entreaties. "But He could not be hid,"—as the Evangelist states; and from behind that brief declaration, do there not seem to flash rays of Glory? "As the Ointment bewray-

(*g*) St. Matthew xx. 15.

(*i*) Prov. iv. 23.

(*l*) See the place last quoted, in connection with the Collect for Christmas-Day; which is derived from Titus iii. 5.

(*m*) St. Matthew xv. 25.

(*h*) St. Matthew xii. 35.

(*k*) Ps. li. 10.

(*n*) Hebrews xi. 31.

(*o*) St. Matth. xv. 22, 23, 24.

eth itself," says one, "so He, whose Name is as Ointment poured forth,(p) could not be hid. And this woman was attracted by His sweetness."

27 But JESUS said unto her, Let the Children first be filled: for it is not meet to take the Children's bread, and to cast it unto the dogs.

The first words of our LORD's reply, contain a gracious intimation that His present denial would not be *for ever*. "Let the Children *first* be filled,"—He says: "The Children," namely, "of the Kingdom;"(q) that is, the Jews. After that, He was to prove "for Salvation unto the ends of the Earth."(r) . . . Take notice, by the way, of the largeness of the term *Bread*; and learn hence, the height and depth of that petition in the LORD's Prayer which asks for "all things needful both for our souls and bodies."

28 And she answered and said unto Him, Yes, LORD: yet the dogs under the table eat of the Children's crumbs.

She accepts the place assigned to her in the picture; yet, even so, she reminds our LORD of her undoubted privilege. Take notice of the boldness of Faith; which wins a triumph, in the very moment of defeat! This was one of the cases of which our LORD spoke, when He said,—“The Kingdom of Heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force.”(s) See more, on St. Matthew xv. 27.

It is worth pointing out, however, that the actual tenor of this Woman's reply is missed in our English Version. "Yes, LORD," she says; (or, "Even so,"—as the word is rendered in the last verse but one of the Book of Revelation: meaning,—Be it as Thou sayest. Let my portion be *with them*;) "FOR," she adds, "the dogs under the Table eat of the children's crumbs." It was all she asked!

29 And He said unto her, For this saying go thy way; the devil is gone out of thy Daughter.

The Daughter was healed, in consequence of *the Mother's* Faith; and in answer to her prayers. The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Mark ii. 5, for some remarks on this subject. He is also requested to take notice that in consequence of our SAVIOUR's commendation of this poor Woman's saying, His Church has evermore made similar language her own, in her "Prayer of humble access" to the LORD's Table.(t) See more in the note on Matthew xv. 28.

"Wonderful change of things!" exclaims an ancient writer. "Once, Israel the Son, and we the dogs: but the change in Faith, has led to a change in the order of our names. Concerning *them* is that said, 'Many dogs have come about Me:'(u) while to *us* is said, as to this Woman, 'Be it unto thee even as thou wilt!'"(x)

30 And when she was come to her house, she found the devil gone out, and her Daughter laid upon the bed.

This, then, is an example of a cure effected *at a distance*, as well as in reply to the entreaties of another. So it fared with the Nobleman's Son at Capernaum,—whom our LORD healed, being Himself at Cana;(y) and so, also, with the Centurion's servant,—who was healed before our SAVIOUR reached the House in which he lay.(z)

From this affecting miracle, performed in a remote corner of the Holy Land, we are conducted back to more familiar ground: and permitted again to recognize the truth of St. Peter's description of his LORD,—as One "who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil."(a) The Miracle which follows is peculiar to St. Mark's Gospel.

31 And again, departing from the coasts of Tyre and Sidon, He came unto the sea of Galilee, through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.

(p) Song of Solomon i. 3.

(q) St. Matthew viii. 12.

(r) Isaiah xlix. 6; quoted in Acts xiii. 47.

(s) St. Matthew xi. 12.

(t) See the Prayer beginning "We do not presume to come to this Thy Table," in the Communion Service.

(u) Psalm xxii. 16.

(x) St. Matthew xv. 28.

(y) St. John iv. 46, &c.

(z) St. Luke vii. 6.

(a) Acts x. 38.

Concerning which place, see the last note on St. Matthew iv. Our LORD was now, therefore, on the Eastern side of the Lake.

32 And they bring unto Him one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech; and they beseech Him to put His hand upon him.

This, then, is one of the few occasions where it is recorded that *the friends* of the sufferer brought the sick man to CHRIST: the Paralytic borne of four,^(b) and the Blind Man of Bethsaida,^(c) being other examples of the same thing. By a comparison of the preceding verse, and what follows, with St. Mark viii. 22, and what follows,—it will be perceived that God grants us our petitions, sometimes indeed in the manner suggested by ourselves; but sometimes, in quite a different way.

And *he* reads the Scripture to little effect, who can doubt that there was a purpose and a meaning in every variety of incident in our LORD's several recorded Miracles: "a Wisdom of God ordering all the circumstances of each particular cure. Were we acquainted as accurately as He who knew what was in Man, with the spiritual condition of each who was brought within the circle of His Grace, we should then perfectly understand why one was healed in the crowd,—another led out of the City ere the work of restoration was commenced: why, for one, a word effected a cure,—for another, a touch,—while a third was sent to wash in the pool of Siloam, ere he came seeing. . . . Doubtless there was, in each case, a reference to the moral and spiritual state of the person who was passing under His hands; though an ignorance of this prevents us from at once seeing the manifold wisdom which ordered each of His proceedings: and how it was conducted so as best to make the bodily healing a passage to the spiritual, which the LORD had ever in His eye." So far Mr. Trench.

To whose judicious remarks it may be added, that over and above the fitness and propriety of every incident, arising out of the moral state of the applicant, or that of the by-standers,—a deep and important meaning is to be sought, *for ourselves*, in many a mysterious,—or, as it may seem, insignificant,—detail: for it is the glory of the Works, as well as of the Words of God, that they look many ways,—and are manifold in their uses. Thus, when it is said by St. Mark, in the first instance:

33 And He took him aside from the multitude,

We are reminded that even so, "the same LORD does now oftentimes lead a soul apart when He would speak with it, or heal it: setting it in the solitude of a sick chamber, or in loneliness of spirit, or taking away from it earthly companions and friends." . . . He took this man aside,—

and put His fingers into his ears, and He spit, and touched his tongue;

But wherefore did He proceed so to deal with him?—Since bodily ailment is the constant type of spiritual infirmity, consider whether it may not have been implied by this act of our LORD, that the deaf ears are *then* only effectually unstopped, when they have received into them,—been *penetrated*, as it were, by,—the Finger, which is only another name for *the SPIRIT*, of God: as was explained in the notes on St. Luke xi. 20. Consider whether our SAVIOUR, by this act of His, may not have been doing in symbol, what He is elsewhere declared to have done in reality,—when it is said of the Eleven Apostles, "Then *opened He their understanding.*"^(d)

Further, by transferring the moisture of His own Divine Mouth, twice to the eyes,^(e)—once to the lips,—of an afflicted creature, was He not satisfying, symbolically, those well-known petitions of the Psalmist,—“Open Thou mine eyes, that I may see the wondrous things of Thy Law?”^(f) “Thou shalt open my lips, O LORD, and my mouth shall show Thy praise?”^(g) Were not those two acts an indication,—the one, that “The Commandment of the LORD,” (“*The Word of His lips,*”) ^(h) “is pure, enlightening the eyes;”⁽ⁱ⁾ the other, that “the tongue of the stammerer” is “ready to speak plainly,”^(k) when the Redeemer hath fulfilled His

(a) Acts x. 38.

(d) St. Luke xxiv. 45.

(f) Ps. cxix. 18.

(i) Ps. xix. 8.

(b) St. Mark ii. 3 to 5.

(c) St. Mark viii. 23; St. John ix. 6.

(g) Ps. li. 15.

(k) Isaiah xxxii. 4.

(e) St. Mark viii. 22 to 26.

(h) St. John ix. 6.

(j) Ps. li. 15.

(l) Ps. xvii. 4.

covenant,—namely, that He will *put His Spirit in the mouth* of the seed of Jacob for ever?

34 and looking up to Heaven, He sighed, and saith unto him, Ephphatha, that is, Be opened.

It is impossible to read St. Mark's account of any of our LORD's Miracles without being struck by the vivid, graphic manner of the Evangelist; the many minute particulars which he inserts, and by means of which he brings the scene before the eye of his Reader. This has been already pointed out in the note prefixed to St. Mark's first Chapter. Thus, our LORD is related to have taken this man aside; to have applied His fingers to the ears, and to the tongue of the sufferer; to have spit,—looked up to Heaven,—sighed,—and spoken. Moreover, *the very word He employed* is recorded: as in St. Mark iii. 17: v. 41: vii. 11: xiv. 36: xv. 34.

But what was the reason of the upturned eye on the present occasion? It seems to have been expressive of an act of Prayer; for it is found to recur in the Blessing of the five loaves and two fishes;(l)—in the address to the FATHER, before the Raising of Lazarus;(m)—and in the Prayer of CHRIST for His Apostles, contained in the 17th Chapter of St. John.(n) The Reader will find something on this subject in the note on St. Mark vi. 41.

The Sigh, or Groan, it is more difficult to explain. But since, at the Raising of Lazarus, our SAVIOUR is said to have not only “wept,” but also to have “groaned in the Spirit, and been troubled;”(o) and since the occasion seems *then* to have been the tears of Mary and of the Jews who came with her, joined to the grief of His own human heart for Lazarus, His friend: may it not be that a feeling of compassion, (excited by some unrelated circumstance,) occasioned the sign of external emotion here recorded by the Evangelist? His notice of it will be felt to be the more affecting when it is coupled with St. Paul's assertion of our LORD's fellow-feeling with His creatures:(p) and especially when the Origin and History of Physical Evil is considered.—This last remark, indeed, suggests that the Human Sympathies of the SAVIOUR were co-extensive with Human suffering and sorrow; and, (as it is said in another place,) that “His tender mercies are over all His works,”(q) to the end of Time. So that the Sigh of “the first-born among many Brethren,”(r) here recorded, was expressive of His pity for every other child of Adam who shall be similarly afflicted, for ever.

And yet, this sigh of our SAVIOUR *may* have been occasioned, by the *moral* condition of the being who stood before Him. Either way, the present becomes another indication of the union of the Divine and Human Natures in the person of our LORD; who sighs *as Man*, and straightway heals *as GOD*. See the notes on St. Mark iii. 5, and on St. Luke viii. 23.

“Be opened,”—is applicable equally to the stammering tongue, the deaf ears, and the closed heart. Consider St. Luke i. 64. Psalms xxxviii. 13: xxxix. 9. Prov. xxxi. 8:—Isaiah xxxv. 5:—and Acts xvi. 14. The Evangelist, however, describes the result with great exactness:—

35 And straightway his ears were opened, and the string of his tongue was loosed, and he spake plain.

Take notice, that the present miracle of Healing resembles, in its method, two others: *that*, namely, performed on the man born blind;(s) and *that* recorded in the ensuing chapter.(t) . . . It follows,—as so often elsewhere,—

36 And He charged them that they should tell no man: but the more He charged them, so much the more a great deal they published *it*;

Many are the recorded examples of a similar act of disobedience; as, in St. Matthew ix. 30, 31, and in St. Mark i. 44, 45; where, see the notes. Consider, however, if those whom our LORD *forbad* to preach Him, could not yet keep silence,—what should the zeal be of those who are sent forth with a strict *command* to preach!

(l) St. Matthew xiv. 19: St. Mark vi. 41: St. Luke ix. 16.

(n) St. John xvii. 1.

(q) Ps. cxlv. 9.

(r) Rom. viii. 29.

(o) St. John xi. 33, 38.

(s) St. John ix. 6, 7.

(m) St. John xi. 41.

(p) Hebrews iv. 15.

(t) St. Mark viii. 23, 25.

37 and were beyond measure astonished, saying, He hath done all things well: He maketh both the deaf to hear, and the dumb to speak.

"All the works of the Lord are good," says the Son of Sirach; "so that a man cannot say, This is worse than that; for in time they shall all be well approved. And therefore praise ye the Lord with the whole heart and mouth, and bless the Name of the Lord."(*u*) . . . Doubtless there was no Work of the New Creation of which *that* might not with equal truth be said, which was emphatically declared of the Old: namely, that "Behold, it was *very* good!"(*x*)

THE PRAYER.

O LORD, we beseech Thee, absolve Thy people from their offences; that through Thy bountiful goodness we may all be delivered from the bands of those sins, which by our frailty we have committed: grant this, O heavenly FATHER, for JESUS CHRIST'S sake, our Blessed LORD and SAVIOUR. Amen.

CHAPTER VIII.

1 CHRIST *feedeth the people miraculously.* 10 *Refuseth to give a sign to the Pharisees.* 14 *Admonisheth His Disciples to beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.* 22 *Giveth a blind man his sight.* 27 *Acknowledgeth that He is the CHRIST, who should suffer and rise again,* 34 *and exhorteth to patience in persecution for the profession of the Gospel.*

1 IN those days the multitude being very great, and having nothing to eat,

Those were the days of our Lord's sojourn on the Eastern side of the Lake, described in the former chapter; when, (as St. Matthew informs us,)(*a*) "great multitudes came unto Him," and cast down their sick at His feet; "and He healed them." In those days it was, that,—

2 JESUS called His disciples *unto Him*, and saith unto them, I have compassion on the multitude, because they have now been with Me three days, and have nothing to eat:

It is impossible to read the statement repeated by both Evangelists,(*b*) that the relief of this fainting multitude arrived on the *third* day, without calling to mind the mystery constantly attaching in Holy Scriptures to the number *three*. Thus, on

(*u*) Ecclesiasticus xxxix. 33 to 35.

(*a*) St. Matthew xv. 30.

(*x*) Genesis i. 31.

(*b*) See also St. Matth. xv. 32.

"the third day" after he had resolved on his death, Abraham received Isaac from the dead, "in a figure:"(c) on "the third day," Pharaoh "lifted up the head of the chief butler and of the chief baker:"(d) on "the third day," the ten patriarchs were released from bondage:(e) in the third year, Joseph himself was released from prison.(f) Consider, too, the period of Jonah's liberation from the whale's belly; a most eminent type of the Resurrection of CHRIST on the third day. "After two days will He revive us," (it is said by the prophet Hosea;) "*in the third day* He will raise us up, and we shall live in His sight."(g)

"It is very observable," (says one,) "that our SAVIOUR had a continual care that none who followed Him, should ever *want*."(h) As it follows,—

and if I send them away fasting to their own houses, they will faint by the way: for divers of them came from far.

Some may have followed His blessed footsteps all the way from "the coasts of Tyre and Sidon," whence He had recently returned.

Our SAVIOUR's "Compassion," (a *human* feeling,) immediately preceding an act of *Divine* power,—recalls a remark which has been already often made on the frequent evidence we meet with in the Gospels of two natures united in the *one* person of CHRIST. See the notes on St. Mark iii. 5, and on St. Luke viii. 23. But how affecting and comfortable becomes this expression of solicitude and anxiety for the bodily wants of His creatures,—when it is considered that it is with the same Holy One that *we* also have to do!

4 And His Disciples answered Him, From whence can a man satisfy these *men* with bread here in the wilderness?

Their own experience of the past ought surely to have supplied the answer to this question: for it was nearly in the same spot, only a short time before,—(as recorded in chapter vi.)—that their LORD, with five loaves, had fed as many thousands! . . . On this, a very ancient writer makes a remark which is quite in the spirit of modern Criticism:—"Admire," he says, "in the Apostles their love of Truth. Though themselves are the writers, they do not conceal their own great faults; and it is no light accusation to have so soon forgotten so great a miracle."

He proceeds,—“Observe also their Wisdom in another respect: how they had overcome their appetite, taking so little care of their meals, that though they had been three days in the desert, yet they had with them only seven loaves.”—The meaning of "desert," or "wilderness," has been already explained in the note on St. Luke i. 80.

5 And He asked them, How many loaves have ye? And they said, Seven.

They are not related to have added on this, as on the former occasion,—“But what are they among so many?”(i)

6 And He commanded the people to sit down on the ground: and He took the Seven loaves, and gave thanks,

In the former miracle, (the feeding of the five thousand,) it is recorded that our SAVIOUR "looked up to Heaven"(k) when He gave thanks. *That* gesture is not recorded on the present occasion; but the *Thanksgiving* finds place in both accounts of the feeding of the four thousand; whereby, we are surely reminded of the duty of "saying grace before Meat." "What a scandalous thing it is," (remarks Bishop Wilson,) "to take our food without being mindful *who* bestows it on us! St. Paul 'gave thanks' in the presence of the heathen:(l) yet Christians are ashamed to do it before Christians."

(c) Hebr. xi. 10. Compare Genesis xxii. 4.

(e) Genes. xlii. 17, 18.

(f) Genes. xl. 20.

(g) Hosea vi. 2. Some of these must needs be the places alluded to by St. Paul,—1 Cor. xv. 4.

(h) Consider Isaiah xxxiii. 16. Ps. xxxvii. 3.

(i) St. John vi. 9.

(k) St. Matth. xiv. 19: St. Mark vi. 41: St. Luke ix. 16.

(l) Acts xxvii. 35.

7 and brake, and gave to His Disciples to set before *them*; and they did set *them* before the people. And they had a few small fishes: and He blessed, and commanded to set them also before *them*.

Take notice how very distinctly it is recorded that it was *the Disciples*, and not our Lord, who distributed to the multitude.^(m) From *Him*, indeed, came all the store: it was the work of *His* Almighty Hands: blessed by Him, and by Him presented to the Twelve for distribution: yet dispensed *by them*, and not *by Him*.

"As the loaves and fishes, though they increased and multiplied in the hands of the Apostles, were made effectual to the sustenance of the multitude, and derived all their efficacy from the power of CHRIST working in them,—so it is in the administration of His Sacraments. For though they must needs be received from the hands of His Ministers, they are made effectual instruments of Grace, solely through the operation of His Spirit, working by them and in them."⁽ⁿ⁾

We cannot in fact behold the Apostles engaged in the manner here described, without being reminded of the office of the Ministry,—which is, to distribute spiritual gifts out of that store which the Lord hath first created and blessed: from a source of *His* providing, "to feed the Church of God:"^(o) "to feed and provide for the Lord's family;"^(p) like "faithful and wise stewards," "to give them their portion of meat in due season."^(q) For doubtless, as "Man doth not live by Bread only, but by every Word that proceedeth out of the Mouth of the Lord,"^(r)—we are to regard in this timely supply of mere temporal want, a type of that Heavenly Bounty which sends "us all things that be needful *for our souls*."

It has been further well remarked by one of our Archbishops, with reference to this distribution of CHRIST's gifts by His Apostles,—*"Be it therefore corporal or spiritual sustenance we receive, although it be at the hands of men, yet it is unto us as if CHRIST Himself, in His own person, did reach out His Hand from Heaven to feed us."* And he adds,—*"They also, by whose means we are made partakers of good things, are unto us the Angels of God, and ought accordingly to be honoured, of what quality soever they may be in themselves."*^(s)

8 So they did eat, and were filled: and they took up of the broken *meat* that was left seven baskets.

The number of baskets, in the feeding of the five thousand, corresponded with the number of Apostles who collected the fragments. See the note on St. Mark vi. 43. This time, the number of the baskets corresponds with the number of the loaves. But a different kind of basket is spoken of, on the two occasions. These Seven, were of the kind in which St. Paul was "let down" "through a window" "by the wall" of Damascus:^(t) a basket of a much *larger* kind, it may therefore be presumed, than the other.

Far better worth noticing, however, is the command of the CREATOR, after *both* His Miracles of feeding, that the fragments which remained should be carefully gathered up. "The Great House-keeper of the World" suffers not that aught shall be *wasted*. Yet that *all* shall "eat"—yea, that all shall "*be filled*,"—in His Sovereign will. And thus, by observing His actions, and noting His sayings, we may learn a lesson from Him for our own conduct at every step.

9 And they that had eaten were about four thousand: and He sent them away.

But, (as we have seen,) not *empty*. They came to Him, hungering and thirsting,—chiefly after Righteousness; and accordingly, they were filled,^(u)—first with Spiritual Blessings, next with the relief of their temporal wants. "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God," as it is said, "and all these things *shall be added*."^(x)

"Observe that CHRIST fed fewest when He had most provision. When He had

(m) See the latter part of St. Mark vi. 41,—and the note thereon.

(n) Dean Lowe: quoted by Ford.

(p) Ordination Service.

(q) Abp. Sandys.

(r) St. Matthew v. 6.

(s) St. Luke xii. 42.

(t) Acts, ix. 25.

(u) St. Matthew iv. 23.

(o) Acts xx. 28.

(p) Deut. viii. 3.

(q) Compare 2 Cor. xi. 33.

seven loaves, He fed but four thousand; when he had *five* loaves, He fed five thousand."

The Reader is referred, in conclusion, to the notes on St. Matthew xv. 32 to 39, for some additional remarks on the present Divine incident. But, as it has been elsewhere pointed out, the former Miraculous Feeding of the Five Thousand(*y*) has anticipated much of what would else have called for comment here.

10 And straightway he entered into a ship with His Disciples, and came into the parts of Dalmanutha.

Or "*of Magdala*,"—as it is said in St. Matthew's Gospel.(*z*) The district spoken of, lay to the South of Capernaum, and therefore on the Western side of the Lake, whither our LORD repaired after He had "entered into *the* ship with His Disciples."

11 And the Pharisees came forth,

"With the *Sadducees*," says St. Matthew:(*a*) and the circumstance is worth noticing, as it helps to explain our LORD's language in verse 15.

and began to question with Him, seeking of Him a Sign from Heaven, tempting Him.

Concerning the "sign from Heaven" which this perverse people required of our SAVIOUR, something will be found in the note on St. Luke xi. 16: something, also, in the note on St. Matthew xii. 38 and xvi. 1. They asked for a visible and extraordinary sign *from Heaven*, such as Moses had been empowered to display,(*b*)—one which should directly point out the Divine Speaker as the promised MESSIAH. Yet did this demand proceed from men with whom *no* kind of proof would have prevailed. Observe, that the spirit in which the demand was made is expressly recorded: they came—*tempting Him*; that is, bent on nothing so much as ensnaring our SAVIOUR,—ascertaining the limits of His power, with a view to exposing Him if He failed. Doubtless, it was the perversity and hardness of their hearts which occasioned the gesture and the reply which St. Mark proceeds to record:—

12 And He sighed deeply in His spirit, and saith, Why doth this generation seek after a sign? verily I say unto you, There shall no sign be given unto this generation.

St. Matthew adds,—"*but the sign of the prophet Jonas*:"(*c*) which, however, the Divine Speaker well knew would be *no* sign to them; (for, as he declares prophetically in another place,—"*neither will they be persuaded though One rose from the dead*.")(*d*) Or, again, the meaning may be, that no such sign as they require,—*No sign from Heaven* shall be afforded them. Our LORD is found to have referred them to the self-same mysterious type on *three* several occasions: on one of which He explained His meaning, and showed wherein the prophet Jonah was to prove a type of Himself.(*e*)

13 And He left them, and entering into the ship again departed to the other side.

How fearful must *their* state have been towards whom the SAVIOUR of the World could thus act!

If the Reader will call to mind what was said in the note on verse 10, he will perceive that the Eastern coast of the sea of Galilee is the scene of the incidents which follow: accordingly "*Bethsaida [Julias]*" is mentioned in verse 22, and "*the towns of Cæsarea Philippi*" in verse 27: where see the notes. Whether the Discourse of the SAVIOUR to His Disciples, recorded in the next verses, took place after the Blessed Company had reached the shore, or while they were yet in the ship, may perhaps be regarded as a matter of uncertainty; but the hill must have been full in sight whereon He sat while he "*brake the five loaves among five thousand*," and "*the seven among four thousand*."(*f*) How must their hearts

(*y*) St. Matthew xiv. 15 to 21: St. Mark vi. 35 to 44: St. Luke ix. 12 to 17: St. John vi. 3 to 14.

(*z*) St. Matth. xv. 39.

(*a*) St. Matthew xvi. 1.

(*b*) See note on St. Luke xi. 16.

(*c*) St. Matth. xvi. 4.

(*d*) St. Luke xvi. 31.

(*e*) St. Matt. xii. 39, 40, where see notes. See also St. Luke xi. 30.

(*f*) See below vers. 19, 20.

have burned within them, therefore, while He appealed to those miracles of mercy, —so recent, and of necessity so fresh in the memories of all!

14 Now the *Disciples* had forgotten to take bread, neither had they in the ship with them more than one loaf.

So careless do these holy followers of the LAMB prove to have been about making provision for their own personal wants. Their usual provision was bread,—the simplest food of all! One one occasion, five loaves was all their store: on another, seven. On this occasion, they had come away provided with only a single loaf. It is pleasant to believe, with a pious writer of other days, that "so captivated were they with the sweetness of the one true Bread which they had with them, (containing in itself all delight,) that of ordinary bread they thought not!"

Take notice by the way, of the revelation here afforded us of our Blessed Lord's ordinary manner of life.

15 And He charged them, saying, Take heed, beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod.

That is,—and of the leaven "*of the Sadducees*;" for so it stands in St. Matthew's Gospel.^(g) From this place of Scripture, therefore, it is discovered that Herod Antipas, the murderer of St. John Baptist, and the persecutor of CHRIST himself, was by profession a Sadducee. Something will be found on this subject in the notes on St. Matthew xiv. 2 and St. Mark vi. 14.

Now, as the Divine Speaker elsewhere explains,—“the leaven of the Pharisees” was “*Hypocrisy*.”^(h) On this very occasion, in fact, He called them “*Hypocrites*.”⁽ⁱ⁾ And the Hypocrisy of which our SAVIOUR speaks, is that subtle, and most deadly kind of Deceit, which, from imposing upon others, ends by the habitual deception of self.^(k) “The leaven of the Sadducees” was *Unbelief*.—Our SAVIOUR here speaks of “*Doctrine*” under the name of “*Leaven*,” doubtless, because of the secrecy and silence with which it works, and the certainty with which it spreads: no less than because of its marvellous transforming power;—so acting upon the thing it encounters, (as we said in our note on St. Matthew xiii. 33,) that, in the end, “the whole [man] is leavened; becomes changed, and partakes of another nature.”

Consider how St. Paul employs the same image, when he invites the Corinthian Church to keep the Passover “with the unleavened bread of *Sincerity and Truth*.”^(l)

16, 17 And they reasoned among themselves, saying, *It is* because we have no bread. And when JESUS knew *it*,

For He knew their secret thoughts. The Reader is requested to refer to St. Mark ii. 8, and to read the note there.

He saith unto them, Why reason ye, because ye have no bread? perceive ye not yet, neither understand? have ye your hearts yet hardened?

“*Yet* hardened,”—as on that former occasion, (the walking on the sea,) when it is expressly recorded by St. Mark of the Disciples, that “they considered not the miracle of the loaves, for their heart was hardened.”^(m) On the condition of heart or mind indicated by this term, a remark has been already offered in the note on St. Mark vi. 52.

18 Having eyes, see ye not? and having ears, hear ye not? and do ye not remember?

In the two miracles of feeding, therefore, there was something to be *understood*, as well as to be *remembered*: and as *here* it was intended that the Disciples should understand *Doctrine* to be spoken of, while *Leaven* alone was named; so doubtless

(g) St. Matth. xvi. 6.

(h) St. Luke xii. 1.

(i) St. Matthew xvi. 3, where see note.

(k) Consider such places as St. Matthew vii. 5.

(l) 1 Cor. v. 7.

(m) See St. Mark vi. 52.

in those other cases, something loftier is to be discerned in the narrative than is conveyed by the letter, which speaks only of Bread.

Surely, it is no less instructive than surprising to find the Apostles themselves thus coming under the very censure which the Pharisees and Sadducees had so lately incurred. For, as St. Matthew relates the conversation which immediately precedes, our SAVIOUR had just been reproaching his enemies with their lack of spiritual discernment: *(n)* and this is precisely the charge which He here brings against the Twelve. Our LORD continues,—

19, 20 When I brake the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? They say unto Him, Twelve. And when the seven among four thousand, how many baskets full of fragments took ye up? And they said, Seven.

The former miracle is recorded by St. Matthew xiv. 15 to 21: by St. Mark vi. 35 to 44: by St. Luke ix. 12 to 17: by St. John vi. 2 to 14. The latter, by St. Matthew xiv. 32 to 39: by St. Mark viii. 1 to 9.

21 And He said unto them, How is it that ye do not understand?

St. Matthew continues,—“that I spake it not to you concerning bread, that ye should beware of the leaven of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees? Then understood they how that He bade them not beware of the leaven of bread, but *of the doctrine* of the Pharisees and of the Sadducees.” *(o)*—Here, then, was a twofold reproof. CHRIST blamed them partly for their distrust of His Providence and Power, which could have supplied their need of bread as readily as it had already done on two separate occasions. Partly (as we have seen) He rebuked them for their lack of spiritual discernment. *(p)* And, (as an excellent living writer remarks,) “though the two subjects of complaint are in themselves perfectly distinct—the one, their want of faith in thinking of bread; the other, their not understanding the allusion to hypocrisy—yet the two are spoken of by our LORD as if intimately connected together, in the heart of man.”

The city to which our attention is next invited, stood at the northern extremity of the Lake, on the eastern side of the Jordan; *(q)* and was wholly distinct from Bethsaida of Galilee, *(r)*—“the city of Andrew and Peter.” *(s)* Philip the Tetrarch called it “Julias,” in honour of Julia, the daughter of the Emperor Augustus. Close by this city it was that the miraculous feeding of the five thousand took place. *(t)*—Our LORD, therefore, having journeyed a few miles in a northerly direction, followed by the Twelve, it is added,—

22 And He cometh to Bethsaida; and they bring a blind man unto Him, and besought Him to touch him.

They besought our SAVIOUR to lay his hands upon the afflicted man—as they had seen Him do in other cases: whereupon, cure had been observed to follow. *(u)* Take notice that this is precisely what CHRIST in the next verse is recorded to have done on the present occasion. He had evidently already entered the town when He was accosted by the friends of the sufferer; for, it is added,—

23 And He took the blind man by the hand, and led him out of the town; and when He had spit on his eyes, and put His hands upon him, He asked him if he saw ought.

The present miracle, which is found in no other Gospel except that of St. Mark, bears a striking resemblance to another act of mercy elsewhere recorded,—the cure, namely, of “one that was deaf, and had an impediment in his speech,” described in the foregoing chapter. *(x)* It bears some resemblance also to the miracle performed on “a man which was blind from his birth,” *(y)* which St. John describes; but differs from every other in more than one respect. Our SAVIOUR inquires of

(n) St. Matt. xvi. 2, 3. *(o)* St. Matt. xvi. 11, 12, where see notes.

(p) See note on ver. 18.

(q) See above, the note on verse 13.

(r) St. John xii. 21.

(s) St. John i. 44.

(t) St. Luke ix. 10.

(u) See for example St. Matthew ix. 18: St. Mark vii. 32, &c.

(x) St. Mark vii. 32 to 35.

(y) St. John ix. 1, 6, 7.

the sufferer, How it fares with him? an act which on no other occasion He is related to have performed. The man's reply,—the SAVIOUR's renewed, yet varied action,—and the gradual nature of the cure,—are all features peculiar to the present miracle. So indeed is that gracious act of individual guidance with which the entire narrative is introduced; for the SAVIOUR is described as "taking the blind man *by the hand*, and leading him out of the town."—"It is remarkable," says a pious writer who is never found to slumber on holy ground,(z) "that among the many pictures of our LORD's Miracles, Teaching, and Life, this action of His—leading a blind man—has never been made the subject of painting, for which it is, in itself, highly suitable; as a symbolical action so expressive of the great Leader of the blind, the Guide of the World!"

On a subsequent occasion, clay made with spittle is found to have been the instrument whereby the Almighty One wrought wonderfully in the cure of blindness:(a) but here, it would seem as if the moisture of those blessed lips had been employed alone. The self-same method of restoration, however, was met with in the former chapter, where an impediment in the speech was removed.(b) Our SAVIOUR is there said to have "spit," and touched *the tongue* of the sufferer, as here it was upon *the eyes* that He bestowed the Sacred Moisture. And how can we fail to recall the suggestion which was there hazarded; namely, that every part of these great transactions was deeply mysterious and symbolical,—full of solemn meaning, both to the immediate object of the SAVIOUR's mercy, and to ourselves?—"The LORD put forth His Hand," says the Prophet Jeremiah, "and touched my mouth. And the LORD said unto me, Behold, *I have put My words in thy mouth.*"(c) Shall we be called fanciful if, seeking to be guided by the hand *by Him*, we presume that when He touched *the eyes*, He intended something symbolical also? The Reader is requested to refer to what has been already written on this subject in the notes on St. Mark vii. 32 to 34.

Is it perhaps implied by the present striking narrative, that He who came (as Prophecy had distinctly foretold,) "to open the blind eyes,"(d) will thus sometimes take them that "sit in darkness," by the hand, and guide them "into His marvellous Light?" first, withdrawing them from the crowd; then, gradually clearing up their difficulties; and, by repeated efforts of His Love, at last enabling them to see all things clearly?—For was not this He who, long before, had spoken such things by His Prophet? "I will bring the blind by a way that they knew not; I will lead them in paths that they have not known: I will make darkness light before them, and crooked things straight. These things will I do unto them, and not forsake them. . . . Hear, ye deaf; and look, ye blind, that ye may see!"(e)

24 And He looked up, and said, I see men as trees, walking.

He had not been *born* blind. He remembered the appearance of natural objects; and, in the hazy forms which already presented themselves to his brightening vision, he beheld something which reminded him of the appearance of trees when seen indistinctly through the dawn. Our SAVIOUR asked the man the question, not (of course) as *needing* the information; but for the sake of others, in order that they might be aware of the gradual change which was taking place: while "for *our* sakes, no doubt, this was *written.*"(f)

25 After that, He put His Hands again upon his eyes, and made him look up: and he was restored, and saw every man clearly.

"The grace of the LORD, which was poured out on many suddenly, descended drop by drop, as it were, on this man." It is in fact the only instance of *progressive* cure recorded in the Gospels. The effect of our LORD's Miracles was generally instantaneous. Yet does the gradual return of the bodily faculty, here recorded, remind us of the similar "drawing on to fullness of belief which is found in certain other miracles: as in our LORD's conduct to Jairus,(g) and to Martha on raising her brother Lazarus,(h) and others. It reminds us of His supporting Peter on the

(z) The Rev. Isaac Williams.

(b) St. Mark vii. 32 to 35.

(d) Isaiah xlii. 7. Consider further Isaiah xxix. 18 and xxxv. 5.

(e) Isaiah xlii. 16, 18. Consider also 2 Cor. iv. 4; Coloss. i. 13, &c.

(f) The Reader may refer, if he pleases, to the notes on St. Mark v. 9 and 30; ix. 21.

(g) St. Mark v. 36.

(a) St. John ix. 6.

(c) Jer. i. 9.

(h) St. John xi. 21 to 40.

water, by the Hand, when his own faith was too imperfect to sustain him: (i) and of His carrying in His arms, or gently leading, the weak ones of his flock." (k)

For are we not to behold in the slow and gradual nature of this man's restoration the result of a defective Faith? The excellent living Writer already quoted, following in the track of the Ancients, assumes the fact as certain. "Why," he asks, "does He who said, 'Let there be Light, and there was Light,' thus proceed with effort? No doubt it was on account of the weakness of Faith, both in the blind man, and in those who brought him; so that his eyes could not be at once opened."

26 And He sent him away to his house, saying, Neither go into the town, nor tell it to any in the town.

Bethsaida, therefore, was not the place of this man's residence. He was forbidden to return, or to make mention of his cure to any within the town, for the same reason doubtless which had caused our SAVIOUR to lead him, in the first instance, "out of the town." (l) There may have been danger of blasphemy and unbelief on the part of the inhabitants of Bethsaida, (m)—as was suggested in the note on St. Matthew viii. 4, in explanation of a similar injunction which our LORD delivered on another occasion: (though this was a different Bethsaida from that spoken of in St. Matthew xi. 21;) or there may have been such motives as will be found pointed out in the last note on the first chapter of the present Gospel. The Reader will perhaps not be displeased to be referred to St. Matthew ix. 27 to 30, and to the remarks which have been offered on that portion of Scripture.

27 And JESUS went out, and His Disciples, into the towns of Cæsarea Philippi:

Travelling some twenty or thirty miles in a northerly direction, and still keeping to the East of the Jordan, (the Hills of Lebanon and Mount Hermon full in view,) this blessed company, after passing the Waters of Merom, had at last reached the fertile district where anciently stood the City of Dan, (formerly called Laish;) (n) the spot where Jeroboam is related to have set up one of his idolatrous calves. (o) Near the sources of the river, was built Cæsarea Philippi: a town so called to distinguish it from the other Cæsarea upon the sea-coast; (p) and deriving its name from Philip, the Tetrarch of Trachonitis, within whose territory it stood. It was more anciently called Paneas; and retains a name closely resembling its ancient appellation, to the present day.

and by the way He asked His Disciples, saying unto them, Whom do men say that I am?

He was with them alone, when He asked this question; (concerning which, see the note on St. Matth. xvi. 13:) and St. Luke says that he had been *praying*. (q) But St. Mark here notices that this incident took place "by the way:" so that the Blessed Company seem to have halted, in order that their Heavenly Guide might hold mysterious intercourse with the FATHER. It will be remembered that before many events of unusual importance in the Life of our Blessed LORD, it is expressly recorded that He *prayed*: and of such an unusual character seems to have been the inquiry which goes before; or rather, the answer to which it led.

28 And they answered, John the Baptist: but some say, Elias; and others, One of the Prophets.

This then was the explanation which common Rumor offered, in the days of the Son of Man, of His stupendous works. That CHRIST was John Baptist restored to life, is found to have been the suspicion of the guilty Herod: "others said, That it is Elias. And others said, That it is a prophet, or as one of the prophets." (r) Some declared that it was Jeremiah himself who had re-appeared: (s) and others,

(i) St. Matth. xiv. 30, 31.

(k) Isaiah xl. 11.

(l) See verse 23.

(m) "If I had not done among them the works which none other man did, they had not had sin,"—said our LORD on another occasion. St. John xv. 24.

(n) Judges xviii. 29.

(o) 1 Kings xii. 28, 29.

(p) Acts viii. 40: ix. 30: xii. 19, &c.

(q) St. Luke ix. 18: where see the note.

(r) St. Mark vi. 14, 15. Compare St. Luke ix. 7, 8.

(s) See St. Matth. xvi. 14.

"that one of the old prophets was risen again."(*t*) The expectation of Elijah (written in Greek "Elias,") was grounded upon Malachi iv. 5, and is found to have been very prevalent among the Jews at this time; as appears from St. John i. 21: and see St. Matthew xvii. 10. These common reports then the Apostles repeated, in answer to the inquiry of their Lord.

29 And He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Peter answereth and saith unto Him, Thou art the CHRIST.

"The Son of the living God,"—as St. Matthew adds, (*u*) and the same Evangelist proceeds to record the splendid announcement addressed by the Holy One to the Apostle who had made so glorious a confession of His Divinity. This passage in St. Peter's History, inasmuch as it redounded so highly to his honour, that great Saint may be presumed to have instructed St. Mark to omit, when he delivered to him the materials of his Gospel: in illustration of which remark, the Reader is referred to the note prefixed to St. Mark i. 1. . . . The Reader will do well to refer in this place to St. Matthew's Gospel,—xvi. 16 to 19; where he is requested to read the notes.

30 And He charged them that they should tell no man of Him.

"That He was JESUS the CHRIST,"—as St. Matthew adds, (*x*) A most remarkable injunction truly! concerning which some observations will be found in the note on St. Matthew xvi. 20.

But "from that time forth," as St. Matthew intimates, (*y*) building on the firm foundation of Faith which His own Almighty Hands had laid, He is found to have prepared the minds of the Apostles for His Cross and Passion which were to follow. Accordingly, it is added,—

31 And He began to teach them, that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected of the Elders, and of the Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again.

So fully was the whole History of His coming Humiliation, and future Glory present to the eyes of the SAVIOUR of the world! Foreseen by Him from the beginning, was every indignity which the malice of His enemies was about to contrive,—as appears from such places as St. Mark x. 33, 34. Take notice, that it was "from that time forth"(*z*) that our SAVIOUR began to lay before His Apostles the outline of His coming Sufferings and Death. Hitherto has He nowhere expressly made mention of either. Henceforward, we shall find the notices of both not only frequent, but, as the time drew nigh, more and more express and particular. (*a*)

32 And He spake that saying openly.

Not *publicly*; but *without disguise*: "plainly," as the word is translated in St. John x. 24: xi. 14: xvi. 25, 29: abstaining from the use of figures or types, which on other occasions, He had used to describe His approaching Death and Resurrection.

And Peter took Him and began to rebuke Him.

"Took Him aside," perhaps, and lovingly remonstrated with Him on the dreadful course of Humiliation which He had just described: seeking as it were to deter Him from it. One of the Fathers says strikingly,—"The Lord loved John; but it was Peter who loved the Lord." It follows,—

33 But when He had turned about and looked on His Disciples, He rebuked Peter, saying, Get thee behind Me, Satan: for thou savourest not the things that be of God, but the things that be of men.

St. Peter, who is thought on good grounds to have withheld St. Mark from pre-

(*t*) St. Luke ix. 19.

(*u*) St. Matth. xvi. 16.

(*x*) St. Matth. xvi. 20.

(*y*) St. Matth. xvi. 21.

(*z*) St. Matth. xvi. 21.

(*a*) See St. Matthew xvii. 22: xx. 18, 19. St. Luke xviii. 31: xxiv. 6, 7, &c.

serving the record of that which redounded to his highest honour, (b) is found to have suppressed neither the instance of mistaken zeal which goes before, nor the present stern, and almost terrible rebuke of his LORD;—concerning which, see more in the note on St. Matthew xvi. 23.

Take notice how particularly our SAVIOUR's gesture is here noticed; His "turning about," (the act, by the way, of one who walks *in advance*;) His "looking on His Disciples;" and lastly, the awful rebuke which He addressed to St. Peter.—Concerning this last, it will of course be understood that our SAVIOUR's words point out *Satan* as the Adversary, who, availing himself of human weakness and human sinfulness, is in reality the one who, all along, opposes himself to God. *Satan*, it was, (not St. Peter,) who was unwilling that CHRIST should suffer Death upon the Cross, and so redeem mankind. The Apostle spake but in love and blindness; for the Eternal FATHER, who had revealed to Simon the truth concerning the Nature of the Son of Man, (c) had vouchsafed to him no illumination concerning the mystery of His Cross and Passion.

34 And when He had called the people *unto Him* with His Disciples also, He said unto them, Whosoever will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow Me.

As if He had said,—Not only must I suffer; but whosoever has the will to be My disciple, must be prepared to suffer also,—to share My fate, even to take up his cross, and bear it after Me.

But what is this "bearing of the Cross," with which our ears have become familiar? Doubtless, it implies the endurance of any burden which God's Love may seem fit to lay upon us,—the instrument of our suffering, and even of our Death. By the World esteemed ignominious, Suffering and Sorrow have yet been sanctified by Him, who made the instrument of keenest torture to become for ever an emblem of Himself.

35 For whosoever will save his life shall lose it; but whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it.

A very important saying doubtless, and worthy of most solemn consideration; for our Blessed LORD is found to have delivered it on no less than *four* several occasions, which it will suffice to indicate in a note below. (d)

36, 37, 38 For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole World, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul? Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of Me and of My words in this adulterous and sinful generation; of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed.

That is, "Whosoever shall, for fear of the ridicule and contempt of men, be ashamed to profess openly his faith in Me and in My words,—*him* will I also refuse to acknowledge as Mine: him will I also treat as though I were ashamed of him." Compare the language of St. Matthew x. 32, 33; consider also the expressions in Romans i. 16; 2 Tim. i. 8,—and again in Hebrews ii. 11: xi. 16. . . . The generation is called "adulterous" because its heart was estranged from God,—for verily, "I was an Husband unto them, saith the LORD." (e) See the note on St. Matthew xii. 39. It is declared that the Son of Man will be ashamed of these,—

when He cometh in the Glory of His FATHER with the Holy Angels.

"For," (as the Divine Speaker added on the same occasion,) "the Son of Man shall come in the Glory of His FATHER, with His Angels; and then He shall reward

(b) See above, on ver. 29. See also the note prefixed to the first chapter of the present Gospel.

(c) St. Matt. xvi. 17.

(d) The present place, which corresponds with St. Matth. xvi. 25 and St. Luke ix. 24: (2) St. Matth. x. 39: (3) St. Luke xvii. 33: (4) St. John xii. 25.

(e) Jeremiah xxxi. 32. Compare Isaiah liv. 5, &c. &c.

every man according to His works:"(f) Concerning the bearing of which words on the entire discourse, the Reader is referred to the note on St. Matthew xvi. 27. . . . The opening verse of the next chapter should also be read in connection with what goes before: "Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with power."(g)

CHAPTER IX.

2 JESUS is transfigured. 11 He instructeth His Disciples concerning the coming of Elias. 14 Casteth forth a dumb and deaf Spirit. 30 Foretelleth His Death and Resurrection. 33 Exhorteth His Disciples to Humility. 38 Bidding them not to prohibit such as be not against them, nor to give offence to any of the faithful.

I AND He said unto them, Verily I say unto you, That there be some of them that stand here, which shall not taste of death, till they have seen the Kingdom of God come with Power.

This will be thought an abrupt way of beginning a Chapter. Indeed, as already observed,(a) it is an unfortunate division of the subject,—leaving the sense of the former Chapter incomplete; and perplexing the Reader who opens the Gospel at the present place. Let it be observed, however, in passing, that he who desires to profit to the utmost by the study of any part of God's Word should, (as a general rule,) notice that part which has gone before; and especially he should attend to the words which have immediately preceded. The end of one chapter often contains a clue to the meaning of the next. Sometimes it is even necessary for completing the sense of it. Some references to a single Book of the Bible, illustrative of this remark, are added at the foot of the page; which the curious Reader will perhaps think it worth his while to examine.(b) On the whole, however, the manner in which the Bible has been divided into chapters must be allowed to be both happy and judicious; which any one may convince himself of, by trying to contrive a better Division.

Requesting the Reader therefore to refer not only to the concluding verses of the foregoing chapter, but also to the remarks which have been offered at the beginning of St. Matthew xvii. and on St. Luke ix. 27,—it shall only be repeated that the Transfiguration of the Son of Man which follows, was the fulfillment of the prophecy contained in the preceding verse.

(f) St. Matthew xvi. 27.

(g) St. Mark ix. 1. Take notice that the same words form the last verse of St. Matth. xvi.

(a) See the note on St. Mark viii. 38.

(b) The "two Angels" spoken of in Gen. xix. 1, are of course the two "men" noticed in ver. 22 of the former chapter.—The first words of Gen. xxvi. offer an explanation of the incident which concludes chap. xxv. (29 to 34).—The first words of Gen. xxviii. are explained by the last verse of Gen. xxvii.—The end of Gen. xxxiii. (ver. 18 to 20) introduces the incident with which chap. xxxiv. (see ver. 2,) commences.—Compare the first words of Gen. xxxv. 3 with the last words of Gen. xxxiv. 20.—Gen. xlv. begins "Then Joseph." But when was that? See the last words of Gen. xlv.—Observe how closely the beginning of Gen. l. coheres with the end of Gen. xlix. . . . Such examples in the New Testament as Acts xxi. 40, (where the sense is incomplete without Acts xxiii.) and I Cor. xii. 1,—(which depends on the last words of I Cor. xii. 13.)—will at once present themselves. Consider the affecting contrast which is lost by disjoining St. John vii. 53, and viii. 1.

2 And after six days JESUS taketh *with Him* Peter, and James, and John, and leadeth them up into an high mountain apart by themselves:

“James, Cephas, and John, who seemed” to St. Paul “to be pillars,”^(c) and who were the chosen witnesses of this great transaction, enjoyed a like special privilege on two other occasions: they had already beheld the raising of Jairus’ daughter,^(d)—and they were destined hereafter to witness the Agony in the Garden.^(e) The only two of them who have left any writings, are found to make special allusion to this their high privilege; and delightful it is,—a matter of even awful interest it may well be thought,—to recall their words.

St. John, in the very first chapter of his Gospel, alludes to the Transfiguration of CHRIST. “We beheld His Glory!” (he says; breaking off suddenly to make that solemn declaration:) “the Glory as of the Only-Begotten of the FATHER.”^(f) But no where else does the beloved Disciple even allude to the circumstance.—St. Peter is far more express. He had doubtless dwelt, many a time, on the glories of the final Advent; and discoursed to the people, (as only two other men in the World could have presumed to do,) on the terrific splendour with which the Son of Man will appear in the latter days. Referring, (as it may be thought,) to those Discourses, St. Peter says in his Second Epistle,—“We have not followed cunningly devised fables when we have made known unto you the Power and Coming of our LORD JESUS CHRIST:”—(that is, His “*Coming with Power*,” as it is said above, in verse 1:)—“but were eye-witnesses of His Majesty. For He received from God the FATHER Honour and Glory, when there came such a Voice to Him from the excellent Glory,—“This is My beloved SON in whom I am well pleased.” And this Voice which came from Heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the Holy Mount.”^(g) Such is the testimony which was borne long after by an eye-witness to the mysterious transaction which follows.

“Learn from His taking Peter, and John, and James,” (says one,) “that three sorts of men shall see CHRIST in Glory. Those who love CHRIST, with St. Peter:^(h) those, who with St. John, are beloved of CHRIST:⁽ⁱ⁾ and those who, with St. James, suffer for the cause of CHRIST.”^(k)

3 and He was transfigured before them. And His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow; so as no fuller on earth can white them.

“White as the Light,” says St. Matthew; “and His Face did shine as the Sun.”^(l) St. Luke adds that “as He prayed, the fashion of His Countenance was altered.”^(m) And this is all that has been revealed concerning that wonderful *Change* which at this time passed upon our Divine LORD, and to which we apply the name of *The Transfiguration*. In the words of an eloquent living Writer,—“A dazzling Light struggled forth at every part of His Sacred Person; penetrating the transparent features, and dissipating the earthly appearance of flesh and blood.”⁽ⁿ⁾

Yet surely enough has been revealed to fill our hearts with gratitude and wonder, when we reflect that as He then appeared, so will His Redeemed appear hereafter: for “we know,” (says the beloved Disciple,) “that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him.”^(o) “The Resurrection-bodies of the Saints will resemble that of their LORD. They too shall shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father; when that which was sown in corruption shall have been raised in incorruption, and that which was sown in weakness shall have been raised in power, and that which was sown in dishonour shall have been raised *in glory*.”^(p) “When CHRIST, who is our life, shall appear,” (writes the great Apostle,) “then shall ye also appear with Him *in glory*.”^(q) And to the same effect are the words of Philippians iii. 20, 21; which mean, literally,—“We expect the SAVIOUR, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, who shall

(c) Galat. ii. 9.

(d) St. Mark v. 37.

(e) St. Matth. xxvi. 37 to 40.

(f) St. John i. 14.

(g) 2 St. Peter i. 16 to 18. There seems to be another allusion to the Transfiguration in 1 St. Peter v. 1.

(h) St. John xxi. 15.

(i) St. John xix. 26, &c.

(k) Acts xii. 2.

(l) St. Matth. xvii. 2.

(m) St. Luke ix. 29.

(n) Goulburn's Bampton Lectures.

(o) St. John iii. 2.

(p) Dr. Goulburn.

(q) Coloss. iii. 4.

transfigure our body of humiliation, that it may be fashioned like unto *His Body of Glory.*"

It will be remembered that when Moses talked with God, "the skin of his face shone:"^(r) but Moses, (remarks an old Father,) "was arrayed with a glory which came from without; our Lord, with that which proceeded from the inherent brightness of Divine Glory. For . . . He was transfigured, not as receiving what He was not, but as manifesting to His Disciples what He was." Then, "that it might be shown that there is but one Lord of the Old and New Covenant; and that men might believe in the Resurrection; and that He Himself who was transfigured might be believed to be the Lord of the living and the dead:—Moses and Elias, as servants, stand by their Lord in His Glory." As it follows,—

4 And there appeared unto them Elias with Moses: and they were talking with JESUS.

St. Luke says that they "appeared in Glory, and spake of His Decease which He should accomplish at Jerusalem:"^(s) they discoursed therefore concerning the very event which, in the announcement, had lately so disturbed Simon Peter.^(t) Concerning this wonderful declaration of the text, the Reader is requested to read what has been already written in the note on St. Luke ix. 31. Some remarks have been hazarded in that place concerning the Lawgiver and Prophet who, out of the whole number of the Saints departed, were made choice of to hold converse on this great occasion with the Son of Man. "Moses, with whom the Lord spake face to face; and the prophet Elijah, who was caught up to Heaven in a fiery chariot: these personages, whom the Lord of old so highly honoured, now appear as the servants of the Son of Man, and talk with Him. . . . Heaven, as it were, comes down" to Earth, "and glorified humanity is made visible to the eyes of flesh. In Moses were represented the generations of the dead: and in Elijah, who died not, those who shall be alive at the last day."^(u)

One of the Fathers points out that "when the Scribes and Pharisees asked for a sign from Heaven, our Lord refused them any; but now, to confirm the Apostles' faith, He gives them a sign, unasked. Elijah comes down from Heaven, whither he was gone up: Moses arises from the Place of departed Souls. So, Isaiah bade Ahaz ask Him a sign 'either in the depth, or in the height above.'^(x)

5 And Peter answered and said to JESUS, Master, it is good for us to be here: and let us make three tabernacles; one for Thee, and one for Moses, and one for Elias.

"'Love will stammer, rather than remain dumb,' says Leighton. St. Peter knew not what he ought to say, but he knew what he felt; and out of the abundance of the heart his mouth spake,—'It is good for us to be here.' He loved the presence of His Lord at all times: he now specially desired it, when he saw it surrounded with honour and glory: he wished to detain Him on the Mount: there to abide with Him for ever; and to return to the trials and temptations of the World no more. He desired, at the same time, the Communion of Saints in their union with the Lord of Life and Glory:—of Saints departed, as Moses and Elias; of Saints still in the same body with himself, as St. James and St. John. 'It is good for us to be here.'^(y)

Thus could St. Peter speak, though he had but a glimpse of the glory of CHRIST. "But O how infinitely 'good' will it be to be in Heaven! How shall we then be rapt up with joy, when we shall be 'for ever with the Lord.'^(z) . . . The Evangelist (or rather St. Peter himself),^(a) adds in explanation,—

6 For he wist not what to say; for they were sore afraid.

It will be observed that all the three Evangelists who describe the Transfiguration, concur in noticing particularly the *fear* which the sight occasioned. St. Matthew mentions it in connection with the Heavenly Voice which followed:

(r) Exodus xxxiv. 29, 30.

(t) See St. Mark viii. 31 to 33.

(s) Jerome: referring to Isaiah vii. 11.

(z) Archbishop Usher.

(s) St. Luke ix. 31.

(u) Churton's Bampton Lectures.

(y) Rev. James Ford.

(a) See the note prefixed to St. Mark i.

("when the Disciples heard it, they fell on their faces, and were sore afraid:")(b) St. Luke, in connection with the cloud which overshadowed them with glory: ("and they feared as they entered into the cloud:")(c) St. Mark, in connection with the words which St. Peter addressed to CHRIST.

7 And there was a Cloud that overshadowed them: and a Voice came out of the Cloud, saying, This is My Beloved SON: hear Him.

It has been well observed(d) that as CHRIST's *future* glory was to be witnessed by three in Heaven, and three in Earth,(e) so was it right that this, the foretaste of His coming Kingdom, besides its three earthly witnesses (Peter, James, and John,) should have its Three Heavenly Witnesses (the FATHER, Moses, and Elias,) also.

8 And suddenly, when they had looked round about, they saw no man any more, save JESUS only with themselves.

The Reader is referred to the notes on St. Luke's Gospel,—ix. 34, 35, 36,—for some remarks on these two solemn verses.

9, 10 And as they came down from the mountain, He charged them that they should tell no man what things they had seen, till the Son of Man were risen from the dead. And they kept that saying with themselves, questioning one with another what the rising from the dead should mean.

So little real notion had they, as yet, of what was to befall their LORD in the end! And it may be thought that, at first, the marvellous sight they had been witnessing served only to confuse and perplex them. They had "heard out of the Law that CHRIST abideth for ever: "(f) nay, they had even seen Him come in His Kingdom:(g) and lo, He speaks of His own Resurrection from Death, as something yet future! The Jews knew very well that the dead "shall rise again in the Resurrection at the last day: "(h) but CHRIST speaks of *His* Resurrection from Death as something which is to take place *very soon*! Nay, more,—the Apostles have seen Elijah come in glory, and depart. But how is this to be reconciled with that prediction of Malachi which closes the Canon of Prophecy, and which the Scribes taught them to expect would be literally fulfilled: "Behold, I send you Elijah the Prophet before the coming of the great and dreadful Day of the Lord?"(i) Accordingly, it follows,—

11, 12 And they asked Him, saying, Why say the Scribes that Elias must first come? And He answered and told them, Elias verily cometh first and restoreth all things; and how it is written of the Son of Man,

It may be that St. Mark wrote—"even as it is written of the Son of Man,"(k)—

13 that He must suffer many things, and be set at nought. But I say unto you, that Elias is indeed come, and they have done unto him whatsoever they listed, as it is written of him.

"Then the Disciples understood that He spake unto them of John the Baptist: "(l) who had come "in the spirit and power of Elias," as the Angel Gabriel had predicted:(m) and had encountered another Abab and Jezebel, in the persons of Herod and Herodias. See the note on St. Matthew xvii. 13.

Elias came "as it was written of Him: " namely in Malachi iv. 5, 6. The *treatment* which he was to experience at the hands of men, was not the subject of prophecy. Without this explanation, the construction of verse 13, above, might mislead the reader.

(b) St. Matthew xvii. 6.

(c) 1 St. John v. 7, 8.

(d) St. John xi. 24.

(e) Compare St. Matthew xvii. 12.—"Likewise shall also the Son of Man."

(f) St. Matthew xvii. 13.

(g) St. Luke ix. 34.

(h) St. John xii. 34.

(i) By Grotius.

(j) St. Matth. xvi. 28.

(k) Mal. iv. 5.

(l) St. Luke i. 17.

Thus ended our LORD's discourse with His three favoured Apostles. The remaining nine had been left at the foot of the mountain, and the blessed company were about to rejoin them. It follows,—

14 And when He came to His Disciples, He saw a great multitude about them, and the Scribes questioning with them.

"The old adversaries of our LORD, the Scribes, had taken advantage of His absence in the Mount of Transfiguration, to win a temporary triumph, or something like one, over His Disciples; weakened as they were, by the absence of their LORD; and with Him, of three, the chiefest among themselves,—those too, in whom, as habitually the nearest to Him, we may suppose power to have most mightily resided. It was on this occasion, as it was before during the absence of Moses and his servant Joshua on his Mount of a fainter Transfiguration; when, in like manner, the enemy had found his advantage, and for a while had prevailed."(*n*)

But before engaging our attention in the case of the Lunatic Child, the Evangelist proceeds to describe what happened as our LORD approached the multitude:—

15 And straightway all the people, when they beheld Him, were greatly amazed, and running to Him saluted Him.

For there still hung about His Divine features traces of that dazzling glory with which they had been so lately invested. The self-same thing is known to have happened in the case of Moses, when he "came down from Mount Sinai with the two tables of testimony" in his hand. But "Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone" while God had been talking to him: and when Aaron and all the people of Israel saw that, "behold, the skin of his face shone, *they were afraid to come nigh him.*"(*o*) Far otherwise was it, in the case of CHRIST. So attractive was "the King in His Beauty,"(*p*)—so much "fairer than the children of men"(*q*) did He appear,—that the common people, when they beheld Him came *running to Him*. And doubtless whatever is *good*, is *lovely* also,—had we but the eyes to see it.

Take notice that the word here translated "greatly amazed" denotes even *more* than is conveyed by that expression. The utmost possible amount of awe and wonder, yet without any admixture of *fear*,—is implied by this word; which recurs in only two other places in the Gospel.(*r*)

The conduct of the multitude having been thus noticed, the Evangelist resumes what he was saying in verse 14. There was a vast concourse of persons assembled; and in the midst of them was the little company of Apostles, surrounded by a party of questioning Scribes.

16 And He asked the Scribes, What question ye with them?

How must the nine have been relieved when they heard the well-known voice of Him whose "word was with power," and "in whom are hid all the treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge,"(*s*) thus taking their part against their crafty and malignant assailants!—The subject of the Scribes' "questioning" was clearly the extraordinary case of demoniacal possession which follows; and which, as we learn from ver. 18, the Disciples had already discovered to be of a kind which defied their skill. It is easy to conceive the advantage which such a discovery must have afforded to the enemies of CHRIST; as well as the eagerness with which they must have pressed their fancied triumph. They had at last learned what were the limits of His power, (as they doubtless wished to make it appear,) and they were insulting His Apostles accordingly: when they found themselves suddenly arrested by the stern inquiry—"What question ye with them?"

This inquiry of our LORD was solved by one of the company: who fell upon his knees(*t*) while he proceeded to make his humble suit in behalf of his afflicted child:—

(*n*) Exod. xxxii.—The quotation is from Rev. R. C. Trench.

(*o*) Exod. xxxiv. 29, 30.

(*q*) Ps. xlv. 3.

(*s*) Col. ii. 3.

(*p*) Isaiah xxxiii. 17.

(*r*) St. Mark xiv. 33; xvi. 5, 6.

(*t*) St. Matth. xvii. 14.

17 And one of the multitude answered and said, Master, I have brought unto Thee my son, which hath a dumb spirit;

The youth was *deaf* as well as dumb,—see below, verse 25.

18 and wheresoever he taketh him, he teareth him:

The hint here supplied as to what befell the youthful sufferer, in what place soever the dumb Spirit "*took him*,"—added to St. Luke's account of how cruelly he was in the habit of using him, ere he "*departed from him*,"^(u)—leads one to suppose that this afflicted Boy was subject to the repeated assaults of his foul enemy; who, in some mysterious way (it is awful to think!) was able to go away, and come back again,—as the inmate of a house does,—to his dwelling. The solemn language (of verse 25) with which the Lord of Heaven and Earth finally ejected him, bears out this suggestion; and throws light, in turn, on the texts which we are now considering.

and he foameth, and gnasheth with his teeth, and pineth away:

Or rather, "*withereth*." The word seems to mean that the very fountain of his life became "*dried up*."

and I spake to Thy disciples that they should cast him out; and they could not.

What a terrible picture are we here presented with, of human suffering and hellish violence. How harshly does this account of what was passing at the foot of the Mount of Transfiguration contrast with the Divine Repose, the Heavenly Glories of its summit! *There*, we beheld the rapturous meeting of Saints in bliss; whose whole talk was of that Great Event whereby the people of God were to be ransomed from Sin and the Power of the Grave. *Here*, an unclean Spirit is found fiercely and recklessly defiling a human Temple,—taking hellish pleasure in the torture of a child! Here, too, is a weeping Father, sorrowful and perplexed Apostles, insulting Scribes, an excited crowd. The harsh discord of Earth is shown us, in exchange for the perfect Peace of Heaven. We feel that we have indeed "*come down from the hill*!"^(x)

19 He answereth him, and saith, O faithless generation, how long shall I be with you? how long shall I suffer you?

He speaks of the inhabitants of this lower World, generally. He had been comforting with the light of His presence, faithful Moses and faithful Elijah on the Mount. He descends, and He is met by an unfaithful (that is, an unbelieving) crowd. Nay, His very Apostles have been put to confusion in His absence, "*because of their unbelief*!"^(y) . . . "This is My Beloved Son," the voice had spoken which "*came to Him from the Excellent Glory*:"^(z) and "*How long shall I be with you?*" is the mournful exclamation of the Son of Man, when He finds Himself again surrounded by the tokens of a ruined World. . . . But He is about to "*do wondrously*." ^(a) Accordingly, He adds,—

bring him unto Me.

"As the staff in Gehazi's hand could not arouse the dead child, but the Prophet himself must come and take the work in his hand before ever a cure can be wrought,"^(b) so must it be now."^(c)

20 And they brought him unto Him: and when he saw Him, straightway the Spirit tare him; and he fell on the ground, and wallowed foaming.

Take notice, that this was the effect produced by *the sight* of CHRIST. It may be that the brightness of the other World had not yet faded quite away from those

(u) St. Luke ix. 39.

(z) 2 St. Peter i. 17.

(c) Rev. R. C. Trench.

(x) See St. Luke ix. 37.

(a) Judges xiii. 19.

(y) St. Matth. xvii. 20.

(b) 2 Kings iv. 29 to 31.

Divine Features. "*When he saw Him*,—straightway the Spirit tare" the child. It was the signal for terrific violence, thus to behold the Incarnate JEHOUAH: for, (as we have elsewhere remarked,) the presence of God is torture to Devils.(d) Moreover, the reign of Satan was now fast drawing to a close. The Stronger than the strong, has come upon him suddenly and bound him,—even while, like a strong man armed, he was keeping his Palace, trusting in his armour, and supposing that his goods were in peace.(e) He had been hurled down from his fancied security,—had fallen, as lightning falls from Heaven.(f)—And therefore was it that he had "great wrath," because he knew that he had "but a short time."(g)

"As he was yet a coming," (St. Luke says,) "the Devil threw him down and tare him."(h) Our LORD proceeded to ask a question of the father concerning this afflicted youth:

21 And He asked his Father, How long is it ago since this came unto him?

Not that He *needed* the information He asked for, on this or any other similar occasion:(i) be sure of *that*! He does but seek to draw from the father a full statement of his misery, for the advantage of those who stood by. At the same time by delaying to act, He sharpens desire,—quickens Faith,—and invites the attention of all to what is to follow. Take notice of the reply of the sorrow-stricken Parent, on being thus questioned concerning the nature of the calamity which had befallen his child. The boy lay stretched before him in agony,—convulsed and foaming. He therefore answers our LORD's inquiry, *in a single word*,—describes in a single sentence, as if to move His compassion, the most terrible effects of the youth's possession,—and passes on at once, impatiently, to pray that CHRIST will administer whatever relief He is able, in so urgent and so grievous a case.

22 And he said, Of a child. And oftentimes it hath cast him into the fire, and into the waters, to destroy him: but if Thou canst do any thing, have compassion on us, and help us.

The man confesses that the endeavors of this foul Spirit to destroy his child have hitherto proved ineffectual. He admits, therefore, that the good Providence of God had ever watched faithfully over him; and is guided, by the experience of past mercies, to hope for more.

"Have compassion on us;" for, (as it is said of Jacob and Benjamin,) "*his life is bound up in the lad's life*."(k) The misfortune of the Child is the affliction of the Parent. This has been already remarked in the note on St. Matthew xv. 22,—where the Woman of Canaan, pleading for her Daughter, was heard to exclaim,—"*Have mercy on me, O Lord!*"

23 JESUS said unto him, If thou canst believe. All things are possible to him that believeth.

The afflicted Father had said, "*If Thou canst do anything*;" in reference to which words, our LORD answered,—"*If thou canst believe*;" adding "All things can be to him that believeth." CHRIST's power is unbounded: man's Faith is less than the least of all seeds. *This* it is which alone opposes obstacles in the way of God's Mercy,—alone sets limits to what He "can do" for His creatures. . . . On how many occasions is the Reader of the Gospels reminded of this solemn truth! See the note on St. Mark vi. 5.—Very affecting is the account of what followed, with reference to our SAVIOUR's implied condition of granting the prayer of the afflicted Parent.

24 And straightway the Father of the Child cried out, and said with tears, LORD, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.

A beautiful saying, truly!—recalling that prayer of the Apostles on a different occasion,—"*LORD, increase our Faith!*"(l)

(d) See the notes on St. Matth. viii. 29, St. Luke iv. 34.

(e) St. Luke xi. 21, 22.

(f) St. Luke x. 18.

(g) Rev. xii. 12.

(h) St. Luke ix. 42.

(i) See the questions in St. Mark v. 9 and 30, and the notes upon either: also the latter part of the note on St. Mark v. 21.

(k) Gen. xliv. 30.

(l) St. Luke xvii. 5.

This man had Faith; or he would never have brought his Son to the Disciples of CHRIST, in order that they might cast out the unclean Spirit which tormented him. But "they could not." At this discovery, the Father's Faith may well have receded. Our SAVIOUR returns in person to His baffled followers; and Faith and Hope revive. The Parent renews his application: "Look upon my son," he says: *(m)* "Have mercy on my son:" *(n)* and he describes the greatness of his affliction. But take notice, that in the very moment of applying for relief, his Faith wavers. "*If* Thou canst do anything"—is the form in which he makes his petition. There needed a fuller reliance on MESSIAH'S power,—a larger Faith than this: and lo, while he confessed his unbelief, "the Father of the Child" became conscious that he fully believed.

25 When JESUS saw that the people came running together,

Perhaps because He was unwilling, or because it would have been impracticable, without danger to the crowd, to cast out the Spirit while they were eagerly "running together" in order to be spectators of the Miracle:—

He rebuked the foul Spirit, saying unto him, *Thou* dumb and deaf Spirit, I charge thee, come out of him, and enter no more into him.

Which last words remind us of the remarkable truth elsewhere so solemnly laid down, that when the unclean Spirit is gone out of a man, after walking through dry places seeking rest and finding none, "he saith, *I will return unto my House whence I came out.*" *(o)* The manner in which this afflicted youth had been subject to the renewed assaults of his foul enemy, has already been made the subject of remark. *(p)*

Take notice of that majestic command,—"*I charge thee:*" *I*, thy Creator, lay My imperial orders upon *thee*, My creature,—"*Come out of him!*" . . . As He had before said,—"*Bring him unto Me;*" *(q)* as if implying that a different result would follow from what had been witnessed in the case of the Disciples.

26 And *the Spirit* cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him: and he was as one dead; insomuch that many said, He is dead.

How very exact and particular is this Evangelist! With how many minute details does he supply us, though his Gospel is the shortest of the four! . . . We seem to see the bystanders crowding round, and making their remarks on the lifeless appearance of the Child, as he lay with the foam on his lips, and every feature distorted with unnatural anguish.

Concerning this last act of defeated malice on the part of the evil Spirit, the Reader is requested to read the note on St. Mark i. 26, and the last note on St. Luke iv. 35. The note on St. Mark v. 13, may be also consulted.—The Spirit though "dumb," yet "cries." The youth could utter no articulate word; yet had he been known, many a time, to utter a yell of agony at every seizure of his foul enemy. *(r)*

27 But JESUS took him by the hand, and lifted him up; and he arose.

The touch of that Almighty Hand,—which conveyed Health to the Sick, *(s)* and Sight to the Blind, *(t)* and Speech to the Dumb, and Hearing to the Deaf, *(u)* which was powerful to raise the dead *(v)* and restore confidence to the terror-stricken: *(x)*—the touch of the same Hand now detained the parting Spirit,—and quickened the pulses of life,—and brought back the healthy current of the blood. The young man arose,—"*was cured from that very hour,*" *(y)*—and CHRIST "*delivered him again to his Father.*" *(z)* Had He not defeated the Enemy, and snatched away from him his prey? Consider St. Luke vii. 15.

(m) St. Luke ix. 38. *(n)* St. Matth. xvii. 15.

(p) See above, the note on verse 18.

(r) See St. Luke ix. 39, and the note there.

(t) St. Mark viii. 25.

(v) St. Mark v. 41. *(x)* St. Matth. xvii. 7.

(z) St. Luke ix. 42.

(o) St. Luke xi. 24: St. Matth. xii. 43, 44.

(q) See above, verse 19.

(s) St. Mark i. 31.

(u) St. Mark vii. 33.

(y) St. Matth. xvii. 18.

28 And when He was come into the house, His Disciples asked Him privately, Why could not we cast him out?

"We, to whom Thou gavest 'power and authority over all devils:' (a) and 'against unclean Spirits, to cast them out; and to heal all manner of sickness and all manner of disease:' (b) we, who already have '*cast out many devils*;' (c)—why could not *we*, when we used the usual form of words, (d) succeed in expelling this deaf and dumb Spirit?"

29 And He said unto them,

"Because of your unbelief. For verily I say unto you, If ye have Faith, as a grain of mustard-seed, ye shall say unto this Mountain, Remove hence to yonder place; and it shall remove; and nothing shall be impossible unto you. Howbeit," (e)

This kind can come forth by nothing, but by Prayer and Fasting.

By which memorable saying of CHRIST, a truth elsewhere revealed is brought to our recollection: namely, that among the evil Spirits, besides a diversity of ranks, (f) there are degrees of malignity, wickedness, and power. Consider St. Matthew xii. 45, and the note there.

But we learn the further secret,—(which indeed it concerns us far more nearly to know,)—that "Prayer and Fasting" are a prime source of spiritual strength;—a method possessing peculiar efficacy in expelling one class of spiritual assailants.

30 And they departed thence, and passed through Galilee; and He would not that any man should know it.

If the meaning be that the Blessed Company at this time *went into Galilee*, in order to pass through it, the suspicion elsewhere expressed (g) that Mount Tabor was not the scene of the Transfiguration, will be entirely confirmed. The reason why our LORD desired to pass through Galilee with privacy, is given in the next verse: (h)—

31 For He taught His Disciples, and said unto them, The Son of Man is delivered into the hands of men, and they shall kill Him; and after that He is killed, He shall rise the third day.

Take notice how the SAVIOUR ever contrives to introduce these allusions to His coming Sufferings, immediately after He has fortified His followers with some singular evidence of His Divinity. When Simon Peter had made his glorious confession, expressive of the Faith of all the Twelve, (i) "from that time forth began JESUS to show unto His Disciples, how He must go up to Jerusalem and suffer many things." (k) On descending the Mount of Transfiguration with His chosen Apostles,—"*JESUS charged them, saying, Tell the Vision to no man, until the Son of Man be risen again from the dead.*" (l) We have just beheld Him work an astounding Miracle, "and they were all amazed at the mighty Power of God. *But while they wondered, every one, at all things which JESUS did, He said unto His Disciples, 'Let these sayings sink down into your ears;'*" (m) the sayings, namely, which are recorded above, in ver. 31.

"Remember how He spoke unto you *while He was yet in Galilee,*" (n)—said the Angels to the Women who visited the Holy Sepulchre on the morning of the Resurrection. The present, therefore, will be the particular occasion they alluded to; and the statement of the Evangelist which immediately follows,—"*And they remembered His words,*" (o) derives illustration from what St. Mark here adds:

32 But they understood not that saying, and were afraid to ask Him.

(a) St. Luke ix. 1.

(b) St. Matth. x. 1.

(c) St. Mark vi. 13.

(d) Consider the following places:—Acts iii. 6, (the Miracle performed by St. Peter and St. John:) ix. 34: xvi. 18.

(e) St. Matth. xvii. 20, 21,—where see all the notes.

(f) Ephes. vi. 12.

(g) See the notes on St. Matth. xvii. 1, and St. Luke ix. 28.

(h) See the note on the last words of St. Matth. xvii. 23.

(i) St. John vi. 67 to 69

(k) St. Matth. xvi. 21.

(l) St. Matth. xvii. 9.

(m) St. Luke ix. 43, 44.

(n) St. Luke xxiv. 6.

(o) St. Luke xxiv. 8.

The language of the place which corresponds with this, in St. Luke's Gospel, should be here referred to.(p) It is evident that until after our Lord's Resurrection, His Disciples understood *none* of these things.(q) No one, however, is found any more to say, "Be it far from Thee, LORD: this shall not be unto Thee."(r) It is simply recorded that "they were exceeding *sorry*."(s)

33, 34 And He came to Capernaum: and being in the house He asked them, What was it that ye disputed among yourselves by the way? But they held their peace: for by the way they had disputed among themselves, who *should be* the greatest.

So that notwithstanding their recent sorrow, there is a dispute among them, "who should be" (or rather, "who *was*) the greatest!" a statement which shows how needful it was that our LORD should temper every mention of His Kingdom with some allusion to the Humiliation and Sorrow which was in store for Himself, and indeed for *them*. . . . A living Writer well remarks,—“If we are surprised that, with such indications of Divine Power and Love, and with Resurrection at the door, they should be swallowed up with Sorrow,—still more are we astonished that, while He is declaring His own abasement, the Disciples of CHRIST should be contending for precedence.”(t)

It will be seen from St. Matthew's Gospel that the Apostles answered their LORD's inquiry by another,—“Who is greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?”(u) His reply follows:—

35 And He sat down, and called the Twelve, and saith unto them, If any man desire to be first, *the same* shall be last of all, and servant of all.

Our SAVIOUR does not here say that the punishment of the ambitious man shall be to be brought very low; though this, we know, is in itself true. The sense of the place is shown by the language of St. Mark x. 43, to be the same as St. Matthew xx. 26,—where it is written,—“Whosoever among you desires to become great, let him be your minister: and whosoever among you desires to be first, let him be your servant.”

36, 37 And He took a child, and set him in the midst of them: and when He had taken him in His arms, He said unto them, Whosoever shall receive one of such children in My Name, receiveth Me: and whosoever shall receive Me, receiveth not Me, but Him that sent Me.

He seems first to have called to His side(x) a little child;—then, to have set the subject of His gracious discourse “in the midst of them;”—lastly, to have embraced the little creature; and, yet holding him in His Divine arms, to have addressed His Disciples in these memorable words, which have dignified Childhood, and enriched Poverty, and ennobled Meekness, for evermore. There is surely something truly awful in the assurance that to receive “one of such children” on CHRIST's account, and because he believes in CHRIST, is to receive both the FATHER and the SON!(y)

38 And John answered Him, saying, Master, we saw one casting out devils in Thy Name, and he followeth not us: and we forbid him, because he followeth not us.

The Disciple of Love,—the most childlike of the Twelve in his goodness, (as we are apt, perhaps rightly, to think,)—comes forward with a statement which reminds us rather that he was one of the *Sons of Thunder*.(z) Yet is there something of childlike uprightness in the very incident here recorded of him. His tender con-

(p) St. Luke ix. 45.

(q) St. Luke xviii. 34.

(r) St. Matth. xvi. 22.

(s) St. Matth. vii. 23.

(t) Rev. Isaac Williams.

(u) See St. Matth. xviii. 1, and the notes there.

(x) St. Luke ix. 47.

(y) Concerning the Indwelling of these Heavenly Guests, see St. John xiv. 23. For the phrase “*not—but*,” see the end of the note on St. Matth. ix. 18.

(z) St. Mark iii. 17.

science felt at once the reproof which His Master's words conveyed; and he was impatient to confess his share in an act which was meant indeed for Love and Zeal, but which might have been the result of Pride or Ambition.

What our SAVIOUR had been saying about the blessing of *receiving* the very humblest Disciple "in His Name," may have brought to St. John's remembrance one whom he had lately seen *casting out devils* in the same prevailing Name.

39 But JESUS said, Forbid him not: for there is no man which shall do a miracle in My Name, that can lightly speak evil of Me.

How are we reminded of a passage in the history of Moses, when Eldad and Medad were heard prophesying: "and Joshua the son of Nun, the servant of Moses, . . . answered and said, My lord Moses, forbid them. And Moses said unto them, Enviest thou for my sake? Would God that all the LORD's people were prophets, and that the LORD would put His Spirit upon them!"(a)

40 For he that is not against us is on our part.

By which words, let no one think that our Blessed LORD gave His sanction to the practices of those who usurp authority to teach in the congregation. Such men *are* against CHRIST, for they are against His ordinances. He elsewhere says expressly,—"He that is not with Me is against Me; and he that gathereth not with Me, scattereth abroad;"(b) which saying of His may well be set against the present. This person was "casting out devils in CHRIST's Name:" he was therefore a believer in CHRIST,(c)—one of those persons concerning whom our SAVIOUR said, "These signs shall follow them that believe: *in My Name they shall cast out devils.*"(d) Nothing whatever is recorded against this man, except, that He did not follow the Apostles. On the other hand, much is recorded in his favour;—for he possessed a wondrous gift, which was the privilege of a mighty faith:(e) while his supposed offence here receives the overwhelming sanction of CHRIST Himself.(f)

"In the whole incident," observes a pious writer, "the most obvious lesson is, that in our zeal against others, we take care that we lose not humility."

To see the connection of the words which follow with what precedes, it is necessary to pass at once from verse 37 to verse 41.

41 For whosoever shall give you a cup of water to drink in My Name, because ye belong to CHRIST, verily, I say unto you, he shall not lose his reward.

Very instructive will it be found to compare this verse, in its present connection, with the similar verse which occurs in St. Matthew's Gospel, at the end of our LORD's Charge to the Twelve.(g) The phrase "these little ones" will there be found applied to the *Apostles*; and it clearly shows with what latitude of meaning it is here repeatedly employed by the same Divine Speaker: in the very next verse, for example.

42 And whosoever shall offend one of *these* little ones that believe in Me, it is better for him that a millstone were hanged about his neck, and he were cast into the sea.

The Divine Speaker proceeds to enumerate some of the commonest ways of "offending."

43, 44 And if thy Hand offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter into Life maimed, than having two hands to go into Hell, into the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

45, 46 And if thy Foot offend thee, cut it off: it is better for thee to enter halt into Life, than having two feet to be cast into Hell, into

(a) Numb. xi. 28, 29.

(b) St. Matth. xii. 30.

(c) For consider what befell Sceva's sons,—Acts xix. 13, to 17.

(d) St. Mark xvi. 17.

(e) Consider St. Matth. xvii. 19, 20.

(f) Consider the language of Phil. i. 15 to 18.

(g) St. Matthew x. 42.

the fire that never shall be quenched: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

47, 48 And if thine Eye offend thee, pluck it out: it is better for thee to enter into the Kingdom of GOD with one eye, than having two eyes to be cast into Hell fire: where their worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched.

If thine Hand, thy Foot, or thine Eye cause thee to fall, lead thee unto sin,—be relentless in thy severity towards them: for better it were to carry a mortified body to Heaven, than in that body to endure the pains of Eternal Death.

St. Paul says generally, “Mortify your members which are upon the earth:”(h) and by “mortify” he means “put to death,” or, as our LORD says, “cut off.” But CHRIST here makes special reference to the Hand,—the Foot,—the Eye: as if to teach that we have need to be most severe against those members whereby we do amiss,—or go astray,—or see, that is, acquaint ourselves,(i) with what is sinful. In the Sermon on the Mount, He thus made particular mention of the “right eye” and the “right hand:”(k) the first, the chief avenue by which Sin enters; the second, the very symbol of action, whether in the way of speech,(l) or manual operation. And, indeed, the “foot” may be thought to symbolize the *walk* of Life—the *ways* of a man. The common phraseology of the SPIRIT certainly bears out such a notion.(m)

And lest any should not heed the Divine Injunction, the pains of Hell,—the worm that gnaws within, and dies not; the fire that burns without, and is not quenched,—these are declared to be in store for the impenitent sinner.

“The awful and solemn emphasis which the distinction of the clauses, and the repetition of the words gives this passage, renders it for the form of expression the most remarkable in the Bible; the three-fold enunciation having in Divine sayings a peculiar force,—as it were the Three Persons of the Godhead setting thereon Their seal. The latter clause is three times repeated, doubtless on account of the unwillingness of the human heart to accept the doctrine of Eternal Punishment:”(n) that latter clause being part of the concluding verse of the Book of the Prophet Isaiah. It is found in “a passage which appears to be prophetic of the Gospel dispensation, and of the final state of the righteous and the wicked.”(o) And here it is right to add a few plain remarks on a subject concerning which it is to be feared that much unbelief prevails.

It is vain, worse than vain, it is a wicked and a miserable deceit,—to seek to elude the plain declarations of Holy Scripture in this, and so many other places,(p) concerning the Eternity of future Punishment. Easy indeed it is to throw ridicule on the imagery employed by the SPIRIT to denote endless suffering,—the gnawing Worm, the Flame and Brimstone of the Fiery Lake. It is easy to speak words of unbelief on this subject: but it is quite impossible to prove, even that the language of Scripture is figurative; much less to prove that the Doctrine contained in that language is not to be literally understood.

The utmost that can be pretended, is, that the Eternity of Punishment is *contrary to Reason*: but that this is not the case, may be easily shown. We need only look at God's moral Government of the World,—by which is meant, His Government of us, in our present state, by Rewards and Punishments,—to be convinced that His Retribution is not, like our perpetration of Offence, a momentary thing. In respect of its duration, it often corresponds rather with the *consequences* of Crime—which we see are permanent.

Of this character are even Human Punishments: Transportation, for example; and still more, the Punishment of Death.

(h) Col. iii. 5.

(i) Consider Gen. xi. 5: xviii. 21, &c. St. John iii. 11, 32: viii. 38, 56, &c.

(k) See St. Matthew v. 29 and 30; and the notes there.

(l) Consider the language of Lev. xxvi. 46: Judges iii. 4: Psalm lxxvii. 20: 2 Sam. x. 2,—a mode of expression which recurs perpetually. Consider 1 Kings viii. 15.

(m) Consider Gen. v. 22, 24: vi. 9: xvii. 1: xxiv. 40. Ps. i. 1. Rom. vi. 4: viii. 1. Eph. iv. 1, 17. 2 Cor. v. 7: x. 3, &c. Also, Eccl. v. 1. Ps. xxxvi. 11: exix. 59. St. Luke i. 79. Eph. vi. 15, &c. See also the note on St. Matth. xxi. 14.

(n) Rev. I. Williams.

(o) Archd. Hale and Bishop Lonsdale.

(p) Compare St. Matth. iii. 12: xxv. 41, 46. Rev. xiv. 11: xx. 10. And see the note on St. Matthew x. 28.

Moreover, although acts are momentary; and habits of Sin are limited by the duration of Life: yet, the same thing cannot be said of *the spirit* in which the first are invariably committed, and the second, persevered in. This is much to be noticed. The Human Will knows of no limit in respect of Time. It stretches out, and reaches on, to Eternity. Now, it cannot be unfair to measure the greatness of the Offence by the character of the Intention.

Further, it is obvious to remark, that whatever we may think concerning the Eternal duration of *Punishment*, the same we are bound to think concerning the Eternal duration of *Reward*. What is probable of Eternal Misery, must be probable of Eternal Happiness also.

Lastly, it is quite idle to pretend to reason on this matter from the supposed Nature and Attributes of God: for we know nothing concerning either, except when God himself has been pleased to teach us; and that He will punish eternally, is plainly written in the Book of His Law.

49 For every one shall be salted with fire, and every sacrifice shall be salted with salt.

"Every oblation of thy meat-offering shalt thou season with salt." (q) So ran the Law; which He who gave it, here quotes. As therefore every sacrifice must be salted *with salt*, (says our Lord,) so must every one be salted *with fire*. In illustration of which words, it will be sufficient to advert to the ancient practice of the Jewish nation to sprinkle new-born infants with salt: (r) and to point out that Fire is a frequent image in Scripture for the gift of the HOLY GHOST. (s) The allusion will therefore be to the preserving grace of the SPIRIT, conveyed in Holy Baptism; whereby Christian men "present their bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God." (t)

50 Salt is good: but if the salt have lost his saltness, wherewith will ye season it? Have salt in yourselves, and have peace one with another.

"The meaning of the passage may perhaps be thus expressed: Every one who is called by God, and received into the fellowship of CHRIST's Body, shall receive, as a gift from God, an anointing of the HOLY SPIRIT, which shall purify and preserve him in Faith and Hope till the coming of the LORD; as was typified by the salting of everything which was offered to God under the old Law. This is indeed a good gift; but if it be lost, wherewith shall it be renewed? Take heed, then, to keep this good gift of Faith and Hope and Love towards God; and, as a consequence thereof, be at peace and charity with men." (u)

And thus, besides reminding us of our renewed Spiritual life, and the danger which always exists of losing it, the present text declares that when lost, it is hard, if not impossible, to recover it: "for it is impossible for those who were once enlightened, and have tasted of the heavenly gift, and were made partakers of the HOLY GHOST, and have tasted the good Word of God, and the powers of the World to come,—if they shall fall away, to renew them again to Repentance." (x)

(q) Levit. ii. 13.

(r) Alluded to by Ezekiel, when speaking of Jerusalem,—xvi. 4.

(s) St. Matth. iii. 11. Acts ii. 3. 1 Thess. v. 19. Rev. iv. 5.

(t) Rom. xii. 1.

(u) Abridged from a Sermon by the Rev. W. E. Jelf.

(x) Heb. vi. 4, 5, 6.

CHAPTER X.

2 CHRIST disputeth with the Pharisees touching divorcement. 13 Blesseth the Children that are brought unto Him. 17 Resolveth a rich man how he may inherit Life everlasting. 23 Telleth His Disciples of the danger of riches. 28 Promiseth rewards to them that forsake anything for the Gospel. 32 Foretelleth His Death and Resurrection. 35 Biddeth the two ambitious suitors to think rather of suffering with Him. 46 And restoreth to Bartimæus his sight.

1 AND He arose from thence, and cometh into the coasts of Judæa by the farther side of Jordan: and the people resort unto Him again; and, as He was wont, He taught them again.

Leaving Galilee, which was the scene of the transactions recorded in the preceding chapter, our SAVIOUR traversed the region which lies on the eastern side of the Jordan; proceeding in a southerly direction, until He reached the district over against Judæa. The precise locality is not marked; but the place thus generally indicated was the scene of the incident which follows.

2, 3, 4, 5, 6 And the Pharisees came to Him, and asked him, Is it lawful for a man to put away *his* wife? tempting Him. And He answered and said unto them, What did Moses command you? And they said, Moses suffered to write a bill of divorcement, and to put *her* away. And JESUS answered and said unto them, For the hardness of your heart he wrote you this precept: but from the beginning of the Creation God made them male and female.

"It is worth our marking that God did not make the Woman of the same earth whereof He made the Man: but He made Eve of the rib of Adam,—to give us to understand that there is but one body in them both; and *that* one body, the only fountain of mankind." (a)

7 For this cause shall a Man leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife;

"*A man shall leave his Father and Mother, and cleave to his Wife.*" Why does it run thus? is it not rather *the woman* who is to "forget her own people and her father's house," (b) and cleave to her husband? Doubtless it is so. But these words, as St. Paul himself declares, contain a prophetic reference to the second Adam, and relate to the Union which was hereafter to subsist between CHRIST and his Church; (c) wherewith to unite Himself, He "came forth from the FATHER, and came into the World." (d)

8, 9 and they twain shall be one flesh: so then they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not Man put asunder.

(a) Bishop Lake.
(c) Ephes. v. 22 to 32.

(b) Psalm xlv. 10.
(d) St. John xvi. 28.

"Let Woman who was taken from Man's side," says Augustine, "cling to Man's side."

Some remarks will be found concerning this memorable discourse, in St. Matthew's Gospel,—to which the Reader is therefore referred.(c) It exhibits a specimen of those disputations by which the learned Jews of Jerusalem were for ever seeking to entangle our Lord; and which He commonly met by referring them to their own books, whose true meaning they had overlooked, or whose testimony they had forgotten. It forcibly illustrates the depravity which had overtaken the national heart; and which rendered it necessary that the very Law of Nature should thus be republished. Our Lord is found to have spoken in almost the same terms, on two several occasions.(f')

10, 11 And in the house His Disciples asked Him again of the same *matter*. And He saith unto them, Whosoever shall put away his Wife,

"Except it be for fornication,"—adds St. Matthew : (g)

12 and marry another, committeth adultery against her. And if a Woman shall put away her husband, and be married to another, she committeth adultery.

There follows, in St. Matthew's Gospel, a truly remarkable Discourse which our Lord held with His Disciples on this occasion. See St. Matthew xix. 10 to 12, and the notes there.

13 And they brought young Children to Him, that He should touch them: and His Disciples rebuked those that brought *them*.

He was asked to "put His hands on them, and pray,"(h) says St. Matthew. His *blessing* was asked for; and obtained, as we shall find in verse 16. This is the well-known Scripture to which the Church appeals in her Baptismal Service.

The Disciples may have rebuked the Mothers, (for doubtless they *were* Mothers, and believing Mothers too, who brought these infants(i) to CHRIST,) out of zeal for their Master, and concern for His repose: yet does this act of theirs seem little in keeping with what we love to suppose of the character and conduct of Disciples. We read without surprise the words which follow:

14 But when JESUS saw *it*, He was much displeased,

For He had quite recently expressed His love towards Children in a very remarkable manner.(k)

and said unto them, Suffer the little Children to Come unto Me, and forbid them not: for of such is the Kingdom of God.

That is,—“For to such *belongs* the Kingdom of God.” See the last note on St. Matthew v. 10.

The same saying is related, and in the same words, by the three first Evangelists. “They are memorable words,” says an excellent living writer: “and we may observe, when the inspired Evangelists come to mention any important Evangelical axiom, (as of taking up the Cross,) or sacred institution, (such as that of the Eucharist,) that, with a sort of Divine Harmony and Union, they adhere without variation to the exact words.”(l)

“He says not *of these*,” writes an ancient Father, “but *of such* is the Kingdom of God: as showing that it is not the age, but the disposition which obtains the Kingdom; and that to such as have the like innocence and simplicity, the reward is promised.”(m)

(c) See the notes on St. Matthew xix. 3 to 8.

(f) Compare verses 4 and 5, and St. Matth. xix. 7, 8, with St. Matthew v. 31.

(g) St. Matthew xix. 9.

(h) St. Matthew xix. 13.

(i) Compare St. Luke xviii. 15, and St. Mark x. 16.

(k) See St. Mark ix. 36, 37.

(l) Rev. I Williams.

(m) Jerome.

15 Verily I say unto you, Whosoever shall not receive the Kingdom of God as a little Child, he shall not enter therein.

The Blessed Speaker refers to the reception of the Gospel message; and declares that unless men accept first the offer of admission into CHRIST'S Kingdom here on Earth, and then the Doctrines of the Gospel, with the submission and simplicity of Childhood,—they shall find themselves excluded from a participation in either. Concerning the little children, it is added:—

16 And He took them up in His arms, put *His* hands upon them, and blessed them.

“Ye perceive how by His outward gesture and deed He declared His good will toward them Doubt ye not therefore, but earnestly believe, that He will likewise favourably receive” as many Infants as are brought to His Holy Baptism: “that He will embrace them with the arms of His Mercy; that He will give unto them the blessing of eternal Life, and make them partakers of His Everlasting Kingdom.”⁽ⁿ⁾

“Truly,” says an ancient writer, “does He take them up into His arms to bless them,—reconciling Himself, as it were, to His Creation which in the beginning fell, and was separated from Him.”

17 And when He was gone forth into the way, there came one running, and kneeled to Him, and asked Him, Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit Eternal Life?

He was a Ruler,—young and rich,^(o) He had probably witnessed our LORD'S gracious reception of the infant children who had been brought to Him to receive His Blessing; and had heard Him declare that “to such belongs the Kingdom of God.”^(p) He desired therefore to know what righteous action which he had as yet left undone, he ought to do, in order to secure for Himself a place in that Kingdom, likewise. And his eagerness to obtain the information made him *run* as well as *kneel*.

But he looked upon our SAVIOUR as a merely human teacher. He had no notion of anything beyond. He was one, moreover, in whose estimation money was *the chief* good; and he was all but contented with the good which he discovered in himself. Whence the title “Good Master” which he offered to CHRIST, was rejected. As it follows,—

18 And JESUS said unto him, Why callest thou Me good? *there is none good but one, that is, God.*

“If it should be asked, for what reason CHRIST put this question,—I answer, for the same reason that He asked the Pharisees, ‘why David, in Spirit, called Him LORD?’^(q) and that was, *to try if they were able to account for it.* The Psalmist had affirmed long before that ‘there is *none* that doeth good; no, not one.’^(r) Since, then, God *alone* is ‘good,’ this young Ruler should have replied with St. Thomas,—‘My LORD and My God!’ And this would have been a nobler instance of Faith, and have cleared up the difficulty.”^(s)

19 Thou knowest the commandments, Do not commit adultery, Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness, Defraud not, Honour thy Father and Mother.

“It will be observed, that our LORD makes no mention of the Ceremonial part of the Law; and that, in referring to God's Commandments, He names only those which relate to men's duty towards their neighbours. It is remarkable also that both St. Paul^(t) and St. James,^(u) when speaking of the fulfillment of the Law, mention the same class of commandments as that here brought forward by CHRIST;

(n) Baptismal Service, from the Book of Common Prayer.

(p) See above, ver. 14.

(r) Ps. xiv. 3.

(t) Romans xiii. 8 to 10.

(o) St. Luke xviii. 18, 23.

(q) St. Matthew xxii. 43.

(s) Jones of Nayland.

(u) St. James ii. 8, 11.

the observance of these being the evidence of men's love to God, and of their regard for those other Commandments which relate more immediately to their duty towards Him."(*x*) Unless there be first the love of our Neighbour, there *cannot* be that love of God which conduces to eternal Life. "For," as it is written in a certain place, "he that loveth not his Brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?"(*y*)

The precept, "Defraud not,"—which means rather "Deprive none of what is theirs," "Withhold not from any that which is their due,"—has been thought to embody in a single sentence the four Commandments which precede.

20, 21 And he answered and said unto Him, Master, all these have I observed from my youth. Then JESUS beholding him loved him, and said unto him, One thing thou lackest :

For the young man, after declaring that he had faithfully observed those five precepts, asked, "*What lack I yet?*"(*z*) "*All these,*" (he said,) he had observed. "*One thing,*" (our Lord replies,) he yet lacked.

CHRIST then, fastening His eyes on him, as he knelt before Him, "*loved him:*" "that is, He showed by some outward gesture that this young man pleased Him, both by his question and by his answer." The remark is Lightfoot's, who points out that the Jewish Doctors sometimes *kissed the head* in token of approbation; and the learned writer adds,—"*What if our SAVIOUR used that very gesture towards this young man?*"

"One thing thou lackest," was His word,—

22 go thy way, sell whatsoever thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in Heaven: and come, take up the cross, and follow Me. And he was sad at that saying, and went away grieved: for he had great possessions.

St. Mark says that his face, (which, doubtless, a moment before beamed with pious desire,) became gloomy and overcast: "*lowering,*" as the word is translated in St. Matthew xvi. 3. And so he turned "*and went away*" from CHRIST! from Him who had revealed him to himself!

But, as it has been well remarked, "the greatest advances in perfection have been granted to God's family by the after-growth of sayings and examples, which seemed at first to have been utterly thrown away. Our Lord's saying to the young Ruler did but send him away *sorrowful*; yet, within a few months, hundreds in Jerusalem remembered and obeyed it; bringing their goods, and laying them at the Apostle's feet."(*a*)

On all this, see the notes on St. Matthew xix. 16 to 22.

23, 24 And JESUS looked round about, and saith unto His Disciples, How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God! And the Disciples were astonished at His words. But JESUS answereth again, and saith unto them, Children,

Observe how affectionately He introduces a saying which was meant to assist His Disciples in understanding the stern observation which precedes.

how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the Kingdom of God!

The danger, then, is plainly declared to be not theirs who *have*, but theirs who *put their trust* in riches. So, in the Sermon on the Mount, "Ye cannot *serve* God and Mammon."(*b*) A person may *possess* "Mammon," and yet serve God: but he may not serve God and be *the servant* of Mammon also.

It must not, however, for a moment be imagined that these words are any cor-

(*x*) Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(*y*) St. John iv. 20, and consider ii. 9, 10, 11: iii. 17.

(*z*) See St. Malth. xix. 20.

(*a*) Keble,—referring to Acts iv. 34 to 37.

(*b*) St. Matthew vi. 24.

rection of the saying which goes before. They are only an *explanation* of it. Our LORD does not revoke His solemn declaration that "they that have riches shall hardly enter into the Kingdom of GOD:" He does but leave us to infer how very closely allied must be the *possession* of riches, and *trust* or *reliance* in them. Hence, the strong expression which follows, and which was well known in the Jewish schools.

25, 26 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of GOD. And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves, Who then can be saved?

"The words evidently sounded as startling to them, as they do to us. And Chrysostom beautifully observes that the Disciples, though poor themselves, were troubled for the salvation of others."

27 And JESUS looking upon them saith, With men *it is* impossible, but not with GOD: for with GOD all things are possible.

Concerning verses 26 and 27, see the notes on St. Matthew xix. 26, and St. Luke xviii. 27.

28 Then Peter began to say unto Him, Lo, we have left all, and have followed Thee.

"What shall *we* have therefore?" he added, as St. Matthew relates; and our LORD, in reply, delivered a very glorious promise concerning the Twelve Thrones to be occupied "in the Regeneration," by those who had "followed" Him.(c) All this, St. Mark (writing at St. Peter's suggestion,)(d) was divinely guided to omit.

29, 30 And JESUS answered and said, Verily I say unto you, There is no man that hath left House, or Brethren, or Sisters, or Father, or Mother, or Wife, or Children, or Lands, for My sake, and the Gospel's, but he shall receive an hundredfold now in this time, houses, and brethren, and sisters, and mothers, and children, and lands, with persecutions; and in the World to come Eternal Life.

"*With persecutions*,"—which particular, though neither St. Matthew nor St. Luke record, yet St. Peter, (who had most reason punctually to observe those words of CHRIST, being an answer to a question of *his* proposing, as all the three Evangelists acknowledge,) remembered them; and so we find them in St. Mark's Gospel."(e)

"The meaning is,—He shall receive, even in this world, blessings which, though attended with persecutions, will infinitely more than supply the place of those earthly possessions and relations which he has forsaken for My sake."(f)

31 But many *that are* first shall be last; and the last first.

This remarkable saying has been already made the subject of a long note, to which the reader is referred.(g) It is impossible to avoid suspecting that, besides its general application, it was intended in a very special manner to serve as a warning to the Traitor, Judas.

32 And they were in the way going up to Jerusalem; and JESUS went before them: and they were amazed; and as they followed, they were afraid.

This was *the last* of our LORD's Journeys to Jerusalem. Take notice how He "*went before*" the Disciples,—"*ascending up to Jerusalem*"(h) with an awful kind

(c) See St. Matthew xix. 27, 28, and the notes there.

(d) See the note prefixed to St. Mark i. 1.

(f) Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(g) See the note on St. Matth. xix. 30.

(e) Hammond.

(h) St. Luke xix. 28.

of alacrity, at which they were both "amazed" and "afraid." He not only goes "like a Lamb to the slaughter," but is impatient to suffer.

33, 34 And He took again the Twelve, and began to tell them what things should happen unto Him, *saying*, Behold, we go up to Jerusalem; and the Son of Man shall be delivered unto the chief Priests, and unto the Scribes; and they shall condemn Him to death, and shall deliver Him to the Gentiles: and they shall mock Him, and shall scourge Him, and shall spit upon Him, and shall kill Him: and the third Day, He shall rise again.

This, then, is another of those surprising predictions of His approaching Death and Passion, which our Blessed LORD is found to have delivered at this time. The Reader is referred to the note on St. Mark viii. 31; and requested to notice how the prophecy grows clearer as the event approaches. It was at first, "Destroy this Temple, and in three days I will raise it up:"(i)—"The days will come, when the Bridegroom shall be taken."(k) Here, it has rather the air of historic record than of prophetic anticipation.

35, 36, 37 And James and John, the sons of Zebedee, came unto Him, saying, Master, we would that Thou shouldest do for us whatsoever we shall desire. And He said unto them, What would ye that I should do for you? They said unto Him, Grant unto us that we may sit, one on Thy Right hand, and the other on Thy Left hand, in Thy Glory.

That is, to occupy the two places of highest honour(l) in Thy Kingdom.

Salome, their mother,(m) came with them, and asked the same favour on their behalf.(n) The promise of twelve thrones, whereon, "in the Regeneration," the Apostles were to sit,(o) seems to have suggested this ambitious request; the two Brothers having already had abundant proof that they enjoyed the special favour of their LORD. It may be, that these ardent followers of the LAMB had already learnt to look beyond the Grave,—their Master's Grave, at least.(p) if not their own,—for the fulfillment of their well-founded hopes of a coming Kingdom. They seem to have thought that by the Gate of Death He was about to enter at once upon a reign of earthly Glory. Indeed, St. Luke says expressly that, at this very time, when "He was nigh to Jerusalem," "they thought that the Kingdom of God would immediately appear."(q)

38 But JESUS said unto them, Ye know not what ye ask: can ye drink of the cup that I drink of? and be baptized with the Baptism that I am baptized with?

To "drink of a cup" is a well-known Scripture phrase, denoting generally a partaking in some heavy and bitter portion.(r) Our LORD elsewhere also speaks of His Death, under the figure of a *Baptism of blood*.(s) Be sure that here, where the two expressions are combined, there is an allusion to the two Sacraments of the Church: by the first of which, we are baptized into CHRIST's Death;(t) and by both of which we "obtain remission of our sins, and all other benefits of His Passion." "They who receive the Sacraments," (says Bengel,) "share in the Baptism and in the Cup of their LORD."(u)

39 And they said unto Him, We can. And JESUS said unto them, Ye shall indeed drink of the Cup that I drink of; and with the Baptism that I am baptized withal shall ye be baptized:

(i) St. John ii. 19.

(k) St. Matth. ix. 15,—where see the note.

(l) Consider St. Mark xvi. 19.

1 Kings ii. 19. Psalm xlv. 9.

(m) Compare St. Matth. xxvii. 56, and St. Mark xv. 40.

(n) St. Matth. xx. 20, 21.

(o) St. Matth. xix. 28.

(p) See Acts i. 6.

(q) St. Luke xix. 11.

(r) Is. li. 17. Jer. xxv. 15, 16.

Ezek. xxiii. 31, 34. St. Matth. xxvi. 39, 42. Rev. xiv. 10.

(s) See St. Luke xii. 50.

(t) Rom. vi. 3.

(u) See 1 Cor. xii. 13.

They were *both* Martyrs in *will*, therefore; though only *one* proved a Martyr in *deed*:^(x) concerning which the Reader is requested to read the note on St. Matthew xx. 23. Observe that our LORD says not,—“Ye *are* indeed able;” but,—“Ye *shall* indeed drink:” as if He had said “Ye shall indeed be enabled, hereafter, to do this great thing.” He alludes to their future advances, after that they were “endued with power from on High.”^(y)

40 but to sit on My Right Hand and on My Left Hand is not Mine to give; but *it shall be given to them* for whom it is prepared.

The words “it shall be given to them,” should be omitted. Our SAVIOUR says that the places of highest honour in Heaven He could give to none “but to them for whom they had been prepared.”

41, 42, 43, 44 And when the ten heard *it*, they began to be much displeased with James and John. But JESUS called them to *Him*, and saith unto them, Ye know that they which are accounted to rule over the Gentiles exercise lordship over them; and their great ones exercise authority upon them. But so shall it not be among you: but whosoever will be great among you, shall be your minister: and whosoever of you will be the chiefest, shall be servant of all.

That is,—“Let him who desires to be the greatest become the servant of all, and he *shall* be great.” But how solemn a lesson is contained in those words,—“So shall it not be among *you*!” How is it thereby implied that the ways of the world are to be reversed by the Ministers of CHRIST. In the World, Authority is desired for the display of Power: in the Church, it is to be desired only as a means of more effectually serving the Brethren.

45 For even the Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His Life a ransom for many.

He confirms this by the strongest of all possible arguments,—the example of His own wonderful self-abasement. . . . “We have here an express declaration from the mouth of our LORD Himself, that He came into the World to give His Life as the price of our Redemption from Death: to die in our stead, that He might thereby purchase for us eternal Life.”^(z)

Our LORD was now within twenty miles of Jerusalem, having reached Jericho,—a city famous in the Old Testament, but mentioned only here in the Historical parts of the New.

46 And they came to Jericho: and as He went out of Jericho with His Disciples and a great number of people, blind Bartimæus, the son of Timæus, sat by the highway side begging.

Observe that St. Mark speaks of him as if he were a well-known character. “He was well known,” (says one of the Father,) “as having sunk from great affluence, and now sitting not only blind, but a beggar.”^(a) Doubtless he was more conspicuous than his companion, (for St. Matthew says that *two* blind men were healed;) and *that* is probably why St. Mark confines himself to the history of what befell Bartimæus.

“Hearing the multitude pass by,” (St. Luke says,) “he asked What it meant? And they told him, that JESUS of Nazareth passeth by.”^(b) Whereupon “he grasped with his heart what his sight embraced not. He is told *one thing*; he proclaims *another*; for it follows,”^(c)—

47 And when he heard that it was JESUS of Nazareth, he began to cry out, and say, JESUS, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

“Who taught thee this, O man?” (beautifully exclaims the same ancient writer:)

(x) See Acts xii. 2.

(z) So in St. Matth. xvi. 28. St. John vi. 51: xi. 50 to 53.

(a) Augustine.

(b) St. Luke xviii. 36, 37.

(y) St. Luke xxiv. 49.

Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(c) Pseudo-Chrysostom.

"Hast thou, that art deprived of sight, read books? Whence knowest thou the Light of the World? Verily, 'the Lord giveth sight to the blind!'"(d)

Take notice that this was a remarkable confession of Faith; for the beggar acknowledged our LORD to be the MESSIAH, when he called Him "Son of David;" and recognized Him as the Prophet who should "open the blind eyes," and "bring them that sit in darkness out of the prison house."(e)

Love's sense is Sight;"(f) but "Faith cometh by hearing."(g)

48 And many charged him that he should hold his peace: but he cried the more a great deal, *Thou* Son of David, have mercy on me.

At first, he "asked;" next, he "sought." Finding both fruitless, he "*knocked*,"—and we shall find that "it was opened unto him!" For it follows,

49 And JESUS stood still, and commanded him to be called. And they call the blind man, saying unto him, Be of good comfort, rise; He calleth thee.

The Reader will perhaps find it worth his while to refer to the notes on St. Luke xviii. 39 and 40.

50 And he, casting away his garment, rose, and came to JESUS.

He was blind; and the very garment he wore, was an hinderance to him. The soul which desires to come to CHRIST, must lay aside every weight,—every thing which may act as an obstacle,—as did this humble pattern of Faith and Earnestness.(h)

51 And JESUS answered and said unto him, What wilt thou that I should do unto thee? The blind man said unto Him, Lord, that I might receive my sight.

"Rabboni" was the word he used; a term which means, (as St. John says,) "Master."(i) Whereupon, the LORD "had compassion" on the suffering pair, (for there were two of them,) "and touched their eyes;"(k) adding, to either probably, the word of Authority,—"*Receive thy sight*."(l)

52 And JESUS said unto Him, Go thy way; thy Faith hath made thee whole. And immediately He received his sight, and followed JESUS in the way.

The Demoniac of Gadara, our SAVIOUR had not permitted to follow Him.(m) The blind man of Jericho, on the other hand, is allowed to "follow Jesus in the way." There was doubtless a reason for this. Some have thought that, because our LORD was going up to Jerusalem, He suffered this man to accompany Him as a witness. Wondrously favoured he surely was, to have been thus blessed with sight, as it were at the eleventh hour! to have been enabled to behold the great Sacrifice which followed,—with a faculty derived immediately from the Right Hand of God Himself!

(d) Ps. cxlvi. 8.

(g) Rom. x. 17.

(k) St. Matthew xx. 34.

(e) Is. xlii. 7.

(h) Consider Heb. xii. 1.

(l) St. Luke xviii. 42.

(f) 1 St. John iv. 20.

(i) St. John xx. 16.

(m) St. Mark v. 18, 19.

CHAPTER XI.

1 CHRIST *rideth with triumph into Jerusalem.* 12 *Curseth the fruitless leafy tree.* 15 *Purgeth the temple.* 20 *Exhorteth His Disciples to stedfastness of faith, and to forgive their enemies.* 27 *And defendeth the lawfulness of His actions, by the witness of John, who was a man sent of God.*

OUR SAVIOUR is at last approaching the Capital,—whither we beheld Him, in the former chapter, proceeding with mysterious haste.^(a) From Jericho to Jerusalem is about twenty-five miles,—a wild road, leading mostly through mountain-passes; which the SAVIOUR must have traversed followed by a multitude of persons. He had now reached that neighborhood, lying East of Jerusalem, where the districts of Bethphage and Bethany unite,—being part of the Mount of Olives. As it follows:

1 AND when they came nigh to Jerusalem, unto Bethphage and Bethany, at the Mount of Olives, He sendeth forth two of His Disciples,

Who were probably St. John and St. Peter,—since those two seem to have been most especially honoured of the Twelve. See below, the note on ver. 6. See also St. Luke xxii. 8.^(b)

2 and saith unto them, Go your way into the Village over against you; and as soon as ye be entered into it, ye shall find a colt tied, whereon never man sat; loose him, and bring *him*.

St. Matthew is very particular in relating that besides the colt here noticed, an ass was also brought by the two Disciples to CHRIST. The other Evangelists do not record the circumstance. Let us be well persuaded that nothing is set down in the Gospel, or omitted from it, without Divine reason: and a circumstance like the present seems full of mysterious significancy. That the she-ass symbolized God's ancient people, who were familiar with the yoke of the Law; while the colt, "whereon never man sat," represented the Gentile World, as yet wild and untamed, and younger in the Faith,—it seems almost obvious to suspect; as indeed it is something more than a matter of opinion. St. Matthew may have mentioned *both* creatures, as addressing his Gospel, in the first instance, to readers of his own nation: and as desirous of recording the exact fulfillment of the prophecy contained in Zechariah ix. 9, which he quotes at length.^(c)

3 And if any man say unto you, Why do ye this? say ye that the LORD hath need of him; and straightway he will send him hither.

"Thus did our LORD, in assuming His meek sovereignty, show that the hearts of men were in His Hand; and though He submitted to indignity from others, yet in such hearts would He establish His Kingdom, and reign in meekness. For the preparations of the heart are from Him; and as, when He needed a room for the Passover, He foresaw who would afford it, and where he was to be found;^(d) so, now also, did He know who was worthy of this honour, and willing to grant what He needed."^(e) See the note on St. Matthew xxvii. 18.

4, 5, 6 And they went their way, and found the colt tied by the door

(a) See St. Mark x. 32.

(b) The Reader is further referred to the conclusion of the note on the first half of St. Mark iii. 17.

(c) St. Matthew xxi. 5.

(d) St. Mark xiv. 12 to 16.

(e) Williams.

without, in a place where two ways met; and they loose him. And certain of them that stood there said unto them, What do ye, loosing the colt? And they said unto them even as JESUS had commanded: and they let them go.

Rather,—“They let them *take them*.” How does the minuteness of this account, (which is peculiar to St. Mark’s Gospel,) confirm the suggestion already thrown out that *St. Peter* was one of the two Disciples whom our LORD sent on the present errand! Divinely constrained, doubtless, we may conceive these men to have been, to acquiesce in the validity of the plea thus urged by the messengers of CHRIST. The whole transaction was clearly miraculous; or rather, it was a collection of miracles.

7 And they brought the colt to JESUS, and cast their garments on him; and He sat upon him.

This was a mark of Royal honour. Take notice that it was thus that the captains treated Jehu, as recorded in the second Book of Kings.(f)

8 And many spread their garments in the way: and others cut down branches off the trees, and strewed *them* in the way.

This was done after the manner of the nations of the East, when receiving a great King or Conqueror. The Daughter of Sion testified thereby, that what Zechariah (quoted by St. Matthew xxi. 5) had foretold, was actually come to pass: “Behold, *thy King* cometh.”(g)

St. Luke says that our SAVIOUR “was now drawing near to the descent of the Mount of Olives;” whereupon “the whole multitude of the Disciples began to rejoice, and praise God with a loud voice, for all the mighty works which they had seen.”(h)

9, 10 And they that went before, and they that followed, cried, saying, Hosanna: blessed is He that cometh in the name of the LORD: blessed be the Kingdom of our Father David, that cometh in the Name of the LORD: Hosanna in the highest.

“Hosanna” signifies, in Hebrew, “Save now.” The multitude therefore are here quoting the words of the exviiith Psalm,—“Save now, I beseech Thee, O LORD: O LORD, I beseech Thee, send now prosperity. Blessed be He that cometh in the Name of the LORD!”(i) From St. Matthew’s Gospel, we learn that they added—“Hosanna to the *Son of David*!”(k) by which appellation, and the phrase “who cometh in the Name of the LORD,” the people openly declared the lowly Stranger to be their long-expected MESSIAH: and indeed, to MESSIAH, this Psalm was admitted by the learned Jews to refer. We shall presently hear our SAVIOUR CHRIST quoting from the same Psalm, and applying that quotation to Himself.(l)

11 And JESUS entered into Jerusalem, and into the Temple:

Our countryman Bede, (deriving the hint doubtless from some old writer,) remarks on this,—“By His going to the Temple on first entering the City, He shows us beforehand a pattern which we are to follow; that if by chance we enter a place where there is a House of Prayer, we should first turn aside into it.” Such remarks have at least *this* value, that they remind us of the spirit in which Holy Scripture is to be read; namely, with a living desire to profit by its every word,—to derive a lesson from every turn of thought or expression. We cannot overlook their value; even while we are deeply conscious that the present visit of MESSIAH to His Temple was an act of unusual solemnity,—of exceeding dignity, meaning, and moment.

and when He had looked round about upon all things, and now the eventide was come, He went out unto Bethany with the Twelve.

(f) 2 Kings ix. 13.

(g) Zech. ix. 9.

(h) St. Luke xix. 37.

(i) Ps. cxviii. 25, 26.

(k) St. Matth. xxi. 9.

(l) See below, the note on St. Mark xii. 10, 11.

Such a verse of Scripture ought not to be read carelessly, as if it contained little. How much seems implied in the statement that "He looked round about upon all things!" The Lord of the Temple, casting His searching glance round about, surveys all things in it; and then departs, at evening, followed by His twelve Disciples.

The event which follows belongs to the ensuing morning. "We may well suppose," (remarks an excellent writer,) "that the thoughts which must have filled our Lord's mind on this morning, while proceeding to Jerusalem and the Temple, must have been such as nothing could explain to His Disciples,—no human language could give utterance to." (*m*) He therefore wrought symbolically in their presence, but spake no words.

12 And on the morrow, when they were come from Bethany, He was hungry :

What a picture are we here presented with, of ministerial earnestness,—of want and privation! The Son of Man comes early in the morning from the village of His sojourn, towards Jerusalem; and He hungers by the way! He is fain even, like some very poor man, to supply His need with the casual fruits of the country. As it follows,—

13 And seeing a fig-tree afar off having leaves, He came, if haply He might find any thing thereon: and when He came to it, He found nothing but leaves; for the time of figs was not yet.

It might seem as if the Evangelist here said that our SAVIOUR came to seek for fruit on a fig-tree before the season of figs had arrived; and then, cursed the tree for not bearing that which it could not reasonably have been expected to bear. But that would be absurd. The simple truth seems to have been *this*. The season was April. The fig-tree *then* does *not* bear ripe figs: neither does it bear large leaves. The leaves and the fruit go together. Where the leaves are abundant, *there* men expect to find fruit: and a leafy fig-tree in April would be a token that figs were to be found there, likewise. There is said to be a rare kind of fig-tree which is of this nature—namely, which is in full leaf before "the time of figs." Our Lord therefore, coming from Bethany to Jerusalem, would have satisfied his mysterious cravings with the fruit of any of the fig-trees which grew beside the road: but the time of figs was not yet. They bore no leaves,—a certain sign that, as yet, they bore no fruit. When, however, "He saw afar off a fig-tree *having leaves*, He came, [to see] if haply He might find anything thereon; and when He came to it, He found nothing—but leaves."

As "very Man," He hungered: as "very God," He wrought the miracle which follows.

14 And JESUS answered and said unto it, No man eat fruit of thee hereafter for ever. And His Disciples heard *it*.

"And presently," adds St. Matthew, "the fig-tree withered away:" (*n*) though, as St. Mark explains, (*o*) the Disciples did not notice the fact till the morrow morning.

Here then our Blessed Lord was exhibiting at once a Parable and a Prophecy in action: for what was this, but the parable of "the barren Fig-tree" displayed in act, instead of rehearsed in language? Who sees not that *the Jewish nation* was symbolized on both occasions? "Behold, these three years" CHRIST had "come seeking fruit on *this* fig-tree, and found none." The Day of Grace had at last expired,—as CHRIST himself confessed, (*p*)—and the tree was about to become dried up from the very roots.

The "hunger" of CHRIST on this occasion, however *real*, was therefore *symbolic* also. The craving of His human appetite was only a faint image of the craving of His human soul. It was the people of His pasture and the sheep of His hand,—the posterity of Abraham His friend, of Isaac and of Jacob,—after whom He chiefly hungered: or rather, for fruits of Righteousness displayed by them. This people abounded in the outward signs of Holiness. Jerusalem had leaves in plenty: she *alone* had leaves. The other nations round about were unproductive hitherto:

(*m*) Williams.

(*n*) St. Matth. xxi. 19.

(*o*) See below, ver. 20.

(*p*) St. Luke xix. 42.

for why? The time of fruit was not yet. But in *her*, while no external sign was away, *the fruit* which should have attended all this leafy show, was wholly wanting.

The conclusion of this history is found in verse 20.—In the meantime, another act, (like that which we have been already considering, highly symbolic in its nature,) awaits us; performed within the Temple of Jerusalem.

15, 16 And they come to Jerusalem: and JESUS went into the Temple, and began to cast out them that sold and bought in the Temple, and overthrew the tables of the money-changers, and the seats of them that sold doves; and would not suffer that any man should carry *any* vessel through the Temple.

"The mystical import of this memorable act of Divine Power, (by which our SAVIOUR expelled the buyers and sellers from that precinct of the Lord's House which they had been allowed by undisputed prescription to occupy before,) was, to intimate that the Gentiles' Court was to be esteemed, equally within their own hallowed inward courts, a real part of the House of God, equally sanctified to the Divine Worship, and to be vindicated from profane violation: for which act, therefore, He cites for warrant the words of the Evangelical Prophet:"(q)

17 And He taught, saying unto them, Is it not written, my House shall be called of all nations the House of Prayer?

Our LORD said "My House be called *a House of Prayer for all nations*,"—quoting Isaiah lvi. 7.

but ye have made it A den of thieves.

Which last expression is taken from Jeremiah vii. 11. "Such were the parables," remarks the very learned writer already quoted, "by which He intimated intelligibly to the Pharisees, and those more instructed in the oracles they abused, that the Vineyard of the LORD was about to be taken from them, and given to a nation which should bring forth the fruits thereof."

It is obvious to remark with one of the ancients on this transaction, that what is here spoken of the Temple, "is to be applied by every individual to himself: for 'Ye are the Temple of the living God,' says the Apostle.(r) Admit not therefore into thy breast the spirit of bargaining, nor the desire of gifts; lest JESUS, entering in anger and sternness, should purify His Temple with scourging,—in order from a den of thieves to make it a House of Prayer."(s) . . . They, surely, who habitually suffer their hearts in the House of God to wander back to the market, or to the affairs of their worldly calling, fall under the condemnation of the text.

18, 19 And the Scribes and chief Priests heard *it*, and sought how they might destroy Him: for they feared Him, because all the people was astonished at his doctrine. And when even was come, He went out of the city.

He went to the Mount of Olives, and to Bethany,—as explained in the note on St. Matthew xxi. 17.

20 And in the morning, as they passed by, they saw the fig-tree dried up from the roots.

One of the Fathers remarks beautifully, that "we find herein a proof of our LORD's goodness. When He was minded to show forth an instance of the Salvation procured by His means, He exerted His power on the persons of *men*; by the healing of their sicknesses, encouraging them to look for the healing of their souls. But now, when He would exhibit a type of his judgments on the rebellious, He represents what was to happen by the destruction of *a tree*."(t)

It is sometimes absurdly remarked, as if in the way of disparagement, that this is one of the occasions when a miracle was productive of *injury* to some part of God's creation. (As if the CREATOR had not a perfect right to do what He will

(q) Dr. W. H. Mill.

(r) 2 Cor. vi. 16.

(s) Jerome.

(t) Hilary.

with His own!) The Reader may be referred, on this subject, to the end of the note on St. Mark v. 13. Such a remark is conceived in the very spirit of modern criticism. How much more just, as well as more edifying, is the reflection offered by one of the ancients; that in brutes and plants there can be neither fault nor punishment: "consider the miracle, therefore," he says, "and admire the Worker of it." We are not to consider that "the Creator wrongs the owner: but that the creature, at His will, is converted to the profit of others."

21 And Peter calling to remembrance, saith unto Him, Master, behold, the fig-tree which Thou cursedst is withered away.

"Dried up from the roots," as we read in verse 20: which plainly indicates the hopeless state of the nation typified by the barren Fig-tree.

The imperfect faith of the disciples made them break out into wonder; as if this had been a great thing for God to do.^(u) Wherefore it follows,—

22, 23 And JESUS answering saith unto them, Have faith in God. For verily I say unto you, that whosoever shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea; and shall not doubt in his heart, but shall believe that those things which he saith shall come to pass; he shall have whatsoever he saith.

All this, however, must surely strike us as a somewhat extraordinary turn to give to the mysterious transaction which precedes. It may be pointed out, in partial explanation, that the Disciples had in fact asked a question, which St. Matthew alone records,—“How is it that the fig-tree has immediately withered away?”^(x) and to this inquiry our Blessed Lord makes answer in ver. 22. His followers were evidently profoundly unconscious of the symbolic character of the transaction which they had been permitted to witness; and beheld in it simply an act of wondrous power. The Holy One, ever condescending to the Infirmity of His creatures, is therefore silent concerning the typical character of His recent act, (which He leaves for the Divine Illumination of a subsequent day to explain;) ^(y) but in the mean time proceeds to impart to His Disciples as much of Heavenly Wisdom as they show themselves able “to bear.”^(z) They have inquired how such wonders are wrought? and He answers them, as He virtually did on a former occasion, by bidding them “have Faith in God.”^(a) Then, because *Prayer* is the very language of *Faith*, He makes the lesson yet more practical by straightway discoursing concerning Prayer.

24, 25, 26 Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive *them*, and ye shall have *them*. And when ye stand praying, forgive, if ye have ought against any: that your Father also which is in Heaven may forgive you your trespasses. But if ye do not forgive, neither will your Father which is in Heaven forgive your trespasses.

These two verses on the forgiveness of injuries have been already met with in the Sermon on the Mount, ^(b) immediately following the Lord's Prayer; and the latter verse is almost repeated in another part of St. Matthew's Gospel.^(c) In like manner, (as will be found pointed out in the Commentary on St. Matthew,) ^(d) verses 22, 23, 24 of the present chapter may be considered to recur three times in the Gospel. Such coincidences will not be overlooked by any one who is impressed with the dignity of the inspired page, and the importance of *His* sayings who “had the words of Eternal Life.”^(e)

^(u) So Chrysostom.

^(x) St. Matthew xxi. 20.

^(y) The Reader will call to mind such places as the following,—St. John ii. 22: xii. 16: xiv. 26, &c.

^(z) Consider such places as—St. John xvi. 12: St. Mark iv. 33. See also the note on the latter part of St. Matth. viii. 2; and the beginning of the note on St. Mark v. 24.

^(a) See the beginning of St. Matthew xvii. 20; in which verse it will be perceived that the remarkable saying in the text (St. Mark xi. 23) recurs: while an allusion to *Prayer* follows in verse 21.

^(b) St. Matth. vi. 14, 15.

^(c) St. Matthew xviii. 35.

^(d) See the note on St. Matthew xxi. 21, 22.

^(e) St. John vi. 68. Consider Genesis xli. 32.

27, 28 And they come again to Jerusalem: and as He was walking in the Temple, there come to Him the chief Priests, and the Scribes, and the Elders, and say unto Him, By what authority doest Thou these things? and who gave Thee this authority to do these things?

"Authority" thus to enter Jerusalem,—to receive the homage and the plaudits of the multitude,—to cast out the buyers and sellers from the Temple,—to encourage the children in their joyous acclamations,—and, perhaps above all, openly to teach the people in the Temple: (f) a thing which He did daily throughout this solemn season. (g)

Those who put this question, or rather these questions, to our LORD, were probably deputed to do so by the Sanhedrin or supreme Council of the Jewish Nation. (h) It is worth observing that the same question was put to our LORD three years before, and by the same persons,—immediately after His performance of the same miraculous action. See St. John ii. 18.

"The LORD could have confuted His tempters by a simple answer; but He put a question to them of such skillful contrivance, that they must be condemned either by their silence or their knowledge." (i) As it follows:

29, 30 And JESUS answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer Me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things. The baptism of John was *it* from Heaven, or of men? answer Me.

That is,—Did John Baptist receive from God a Commission to Baptize? or was it a mere human device, an assumption of his own?

31 And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From Heaven; He will say, Why did ye not believe him?

By which they probably alluded, above all, to the witness borne by the Baptist to our LORD as the MESSIAH. (k)

32, 33 But if we shall say, Of men,—they feared the people: for all *men* counted John, that he was a prophet indeed. And they answered and said unto JESUS, We cannot tell. And JESUS answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things.

For that which is holy may not be given to dogs; neither are pearls to be cast before swine. (l) "Even if He had told them, it would have profited them nothing; because the darkened will cannot perceive the things of the Light. Him that inquires, we are bound to instruct: but him that tempts, we may defeat with a stroke of reasoning." (m) See more in the note on St. Matthew xxi. 27.

(f) See St. Matthew xxi. 23, and St. Luke xx. 1.

(h) See the note on . . . St. Matth. xix. 3.

(i) Jerome.

(l) St. Matth. vii. 6.

(g) St. Mark xiv. 49.

(k) See St. John i. 29 to 34: 36.

(m) Pseudo-Chrysostom.

CHAPTER XII.

1 *In a Parable of the Vineyard let out to unthankful Husbandmen, CHRIST foretelleth the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles.* 13 *He avoideth the snare of the Pharisees and Herodians about paying tribute to Caesar.* 18 *Convinceth the error of the Sadducees, who denied the Resurrection.* 28 *Resolveth the Scribe, who questioned of the first Commandment.* 35 *Refuteth the opinion that the Scribes held of CHRIST.* 38 *Bidding the people to beware of their ambition and hypocrisy.* 41 *And commendeth the poor Widow for her two mites, above all.*

1 AND He began to speak unto them by parables.

Our SAVIOUR, who had already delivered the Parable of "the Two Sons,"^(a) proceeds, (as the heading of the present chapter reminds us,) "in a parable of the Vineyard let out to unthankful husbandmen," to foretell "the reprobation of the Jews, and the calling of the Gentiles." It cannot be doubted that the present parable, addressed not only to the Pharisees, but to the people at large,^(b) is entitled to especial notice; since, of the three parables which our LORD now delivered, according to St. Matthew, it is the only one noticed by St. Mark or St. Luke,—who both repeat it, and in very similar language.

A certain Man planted a Vineyard, and set an Hedge about it, and digged a place for the Winefat, and built a Tower, and let it out to husbandmen, and went into a far country.

For the literal meaning of the "hedge," "winefat," and "tower," see the note on St. Matthew xxi. 33.

Now, "the Vineyard of the LORD of Hosts [was] the House of Israel, and the men of Judah His pleasant plant: and He looked for judgment, but behold oppression; for righteousness, but behold a cry."^(c) It is not only remarkable, but highly instructive also, to observe how faithfully the Gospel reproduces the language with which God's people had been made familiar under the Law: thus, how is it possible to read the words which go before, without recalling the description of the prophet Isaiah?—"My well-beloved hath a Vineyard in a very fruitful hill: and He fenced it, and gathered out the stones thereof, and planted it with the choicest vine, and built a tower in the midst of it, and also made a winepress therein."^(d) It is certain that our LORD intended, by the language He employed on the present occasion, to remind His hearers of that well-known place in fulfilled Prophecy; and thereby to suggest to as many as had "ears to hear" the equally certain, equally terrible retribution which now awaited the guilty city.

This image of a Vineyard, in fact, "runs throughout the Old Testament;^(e) and has this especial fitness,—that no property was considered to yield so large a return;^(f) none was therefore of such price and esteem, even as none required such unceasing care and attention."^(g)

The Jewish nation,—that Vine which God brought out of Egypt, casting out the heathen in order to plant it,^(h)—had been "hedged" about in a surprising manner. The Law, a "wall of partition" as the great Apostle terms it,⁽ⁱ⁾ was, in itself a cause that the people dwelt alone, and were not reckoned among the nations.^(k)

(a) St. Matth. xxi. 23 to 32.

(b) St. Luke xx. 9.

(c) Isaiah v. 7.

(d) Isaiah v. 1, 2.

(e) Ps. lxxx. 8 to 16. Is. xxvii. 1 to 6. Nahum ii. 2. Jer. ii. 21. Ezek. xv. 1 to 6: xix. 10 to 14.

(f) Solomon's Song viii. 11.

(g) Trench.

(h) Ps. lxxx. 8.

(i) Eph. ii. 14.

(k) Numb. xxiii. 9.

The natural features of the Holy Land further constituted a physical cause of isolation,—mountains and a river, the desert and the sea, fencing off Palestine from the other nations. But chiefly the loving protection of Almighty God it was, which had “made an hedge about” His people, “and about all that they had on every side.”(l)

Have not the “winefat” and the “tower” a mystical meaning? or do they merely denote that nothing “more could have been done to God’s Vineyard, than He had done in it?”(m) It is obvious to suspect that, by the “Tower,” the Temple of Jerusalem,—the “*Tower of the flock*, the strong-hold of the Daughter of Sion,”(n)—may be intended. The object of a “Tower,” as elsewhere stated,(o) was for the overseeing and watching of the Vineyard: and are not God’s priests “overseers,” and “watchmen?” St. Paul addressed the elders of the Church of Ephesus by the former name, exhorting them to “watch:”(p) by the latter, God Himself addresses His prophet Ezekiel; saying, “I have set thee a Watchman unto the House of Israel.”(q) And what if,—guided by that striking expression, “*the blood of grapes*,”(r)—we should suspect that the altar of sacrifice at Jerusalem was specially designated by the “wine-press?”—We certainly need not perplex ourselves as to who are meant by the Husbandmen, here. The nation in general, and their rulers in particular, are obviously intended,—who are known to have entered into solemn covenant with the Lord of the Vineyard.

2 And at the season He sent to the husbandmen a Servant, that He might receive from the husbandmen of the fruit of the vineyard.

We are not, of course, to press every little detail in a cold critical spirit. It may suffice us to consider generally that the conduct of a Householder in respect of his Vineyard is here set forth; and to notice what corresponds therewith, in the course pursued by Almighty God with regard to His people. After the giving of the Law, and the planting of Israel in Canaan, when sufficient time had elapsed for the results of that Divine system under which they lived to become apparent,—or as the parable expresses it, “when the season of fruit drew near,”(s)—God sent to them “a Servant,” that is, one of His ancient Prophets.

3, 4, 5 And they caught *him*, and beat him, and sent *him* away empty. And again He sent unto them another Servant; and at him they cast stones, and wounded *him* in the head, and sent *him* away shamefully handled. And again He sent another; and him they killed,

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that *killest* the Prophets, and *stonest* them which are sent unto thee!”(t)

Mark well the long-suffering patience of the Householder. He could have taken summary vengeance on those wicked Husbandmen for their treatment of His first Servant, as the issue proved;(u) but in the meantime He sends another,—whom they stoned; and yet another,—whom they killed:

and many others; beating some, and killing some.

So had the Prophets been treated, which God, from time to time, had sent to His chosen people. As it is written,—“They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: . . . being destitute, afflicted, tormented; of whom the World was not worthy!”(x)—“The Lord God . . . sent to them by His Messengers, rising up betimes, and sending; because He had compassion on His people, and on His dwelling-place. But they mocked the Messengers of God, and despised His words, and misused His Prophets; until the wrath of the Lord arose against His people, till there was no remedy.”(y) Such was the remarkable testimony of an eye-witness of what had occurred in times past!

(l) Job i. 10.

(m) Isaiah v. 4.

(n) Micah iv. 8.

(o) See the note on St. Matthew xxi. 33.

(p) Acts xx. 17, 28, 31.

(q) Ezek. xxxiii. 7: also iii. 17. Read Ezek. xxxiii. 2 to 9.

(r) Gen. xlix. 11. Deut. xxxii. 14. Consider also well, Is. lxiii. 2, 3. Rev. xiv. 19, 20: xix. 15.

(s) St. Matth. xxi. 24.

(t) St. Matth. xxiii. 37.

(u) See below, ver. 9.

(x) Hebrews xi. 37, 38.

(y) 2 Chron. xxxvi. 15, 16.

6 Having yet therefore one Son, His well-beloved, He sent Him also last unto them, saying, They will reverence My Son.

For "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the Fathers by the Prophets, hath in these last days spoken unto us by His Son, whom He hath appointed Heir of all things." So entirely do the two first verses of the Epistle to the Hebrews exhibit a short summary of the present parable! "This, then, was the last and crowning effort of Divine Mercy; after which, on the one side, all the resources even of Heavenly Love are exhausted: on the other, the measure of Sin is perfectly filled up.^(z) The description of the Son as the "only" one, and as the "well-beloved," marks as strongly as possible the difference of rank between Him and the servants,—the worth and dignity of His person, who alone was a Son in the highest sense of the word. And, doubtless, our LORD's actual hearers quite understood what He meant, and the honour which in these words He claimed as His own."^(a)

7 But those husbandmen said among themselves, This is the Heir: come, let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be our's.

Consider how Type, Parable, and History point in one and the same direction. A passage in the history of Joseph,^(b)—and the sacred narrative contained in the Gospel,^(c)—will readily present themselves to the memory. The "servants" when they conspire against the "Heir of all things," actually assign as their motive, that "if they let Him alone," they "will lose both their place and nation." What is this but to say, "Let us kill Him, and the inheritance shall be ours?"

"Ask of Me, and I will give Thee the Heathen for Thine Inheritance."^(d) So speaks the Eternal FATHER, by His Prophet. "The inheritance of the Son is the Church: an inheritance not *left* to Him, but wonderfully purchased to Himself by His own Death."

8 And they took Him, and killed Him, and cast Him out of the Vineyard.

In these words, then, our Blessed LORD predicts His own shameful Death.—Consider how apposite to all that has gone before is the dying address of the first martyr St. Stephen, to his stiffnecked fellow-countrymen:—"Which of the prophets have not your fathers persecuted? and they have slain them which showed before of the coming of the Just One; of whom ye have been now the betrayers and murderers."^(e)

9 What shall therefore the Lord of the Vineyard do? He will come and destroy the husbandmen, and will give the Vineyard unto others.

As it is written in the Book of Nehemiah, with reference to God's judgments in time past,—"Many years didst Thou forbear them, and testifiedst against them by Thy Spirit in Thy Prophets: yet would they not give ear:" "therefore Thou deliveredst them into the hand of their enemies, who vexed them."^(f) And by one greater than Nehemiah, with reference to God's judgments yet future,—"The Wisdom of God said, I will send them Prophets and Apostles:"^(g) "behold, I send unto you Prophets, and Wise men, and Scribes: and some of them ye shall kill and crucify; and some of them ye shall scourge, . . . and persecute; . . . that upon you may come all the righteous blood shed upon the Earth."^(h)

It seems worth observing that, in all the three Gospels, the prophetic character of our LORD's Discourse is clearly marked by the form which the parable suddenly assumes at this place. The Blessed Speaker uses an interrogation: the reply to which, indicates an event yet future; though the Parable throughout, has related to a past transaction. Accordingly, in St. Matthew's Gospel, it is plainly added,—"Therefore say I unto you, The Kingdom of God *shall be taken from you*, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof."⁽ⁱ⁾

(z) See St. Matth. xxiii. 32, and the note there.

(b) Genesis xxxvii. 19, 20.

(d) Ps. ii. 8.

(f) Nehemiah ix. 30, 27.

(h) St. Matthew xxiii. 34, 35.

(a) Trench.

(c) St. John xi. 47 to 53.

(e) Acts vii. 52.

(g) St. Luke xi. 49.

(i) St. Matthew xxi. 43.

It will be found instructive to consider St. Matthew xxiii. 29 to 36, in connection with the present place.—Our LORD proceeds to quote a prophecy from the Old Testament, in order to convince His hearers that the course of events which He was describing had been foreseen in the deep counsels of God.

10, 11 And have ye not read this Scripture, The stone which the builders rejected is become the head of the corner: this was the LORD's doing, and it is marvellous in our eyes?

The words are found in the cxviii. Psalm, (k)—the reference of which to the days of MESSIAH, was admitted by the Jews themselves: as indeed the multitude are found to have already applied it to our SAVIOUR CHRIST. (l) St. Luke intimates that the Divine Speaker fastened His eyes (m) on His amazed auditory while He delivered this citation from ancient prophecy as applicable to the matter in hand.

12 And they sought to lay hold on Him, but feared the people: for they knew that He had spoken the Parable against them: and they left Him, and went their way.

13, 14, 15 And they send unto Him certain of the Pharisees and of the Herodians, to catch Him in His words. And when they were come, they say unto Him, Master, we know that Thou art true, and carest for no man: for Thou regardest not the person of men, but teachest the way of GOD in truth: Is it lawful to give tribute to Cæsar, or not? Shall we give, or shall we not give?

16, 17 But He, knowing their hypocrisy, said unto them, Why tempt ye Me? bring Me a penny that I may see it. And they brought it. And He saith unto them, Whose is this image and superscription? And they said unto Him, Cæsar's. And JESUS answering said unto them, Render to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, and to GOD the things that are GOD's. And they marvelled at Him.

"And left Him, and went their way." (n)—Concerning this crafty assault made against the Holy One by a party of persons whom St. Luke describes as "spies, feigning themselves just men;" (o) the reader is referred to the Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel. (p) Concerning the "Pharisees and Herodians," see the note on St. Matthew xxii. 17.

"The Pharisees with the Herodians being thus confuted, the Sadducees next offer themselves." (q)

18, 19 Then come unto Him the Sadducees, which say there is no Resurrection; and they asked Him, saying, Master, Moses wrote unto us, If a man's brother die, and leave his wife *behind him*, and leave no children, that his brother should take his wife, and raise up seed unto his brother.

This law is found in Deuteronomy xxv. 5 (which the Reader is requested to refer to); but it is here rather quoted from Gen. xxxviii. 8. Observe the expression "shall *raise up*." Beyond question, the mystical intention of this remarkable law was, by setting before the eye a type of the Resurrection of the body, to keep alive among mankind a belief in that doctrine; and to nourish the blessed hope of everlasting life after Death. (r) And yet, these unbelievers are found to make the law itself the ground and occasion of their low sensual objection to that very Doctrine: saying,

(k) Ps. cxviii. 22, 23: which is also twice quoted by St. Peter,—Acts iv. 11, and 1 St. Peter ii. 7. What the "corner-stone" was, is not exactly understood.

(l) See above, the note on St. Mark xi. 9, 10.

(m) St. Luke xx. 17. Compare St. Matthew xix. 26.

(n) St. Luke xx. 20.

(q) Chrysostom.

(n) St. Matthew xxii. 22.

(p) St. Luke xx. 20 to 26.

(r) Julius Africanus, A.D. 216.

20, 21, 22, 23 Now there were seven brethren: and the first took a wife, and dying left no seed. And the second took her, and died, neither left he any seed: and the third likewise. And the seven had her, and left no seed: last of all the woman died also. In the Resurrection therefore, when they shall rise, whose wife shall she be of them? for seven had her to wife.

"Such is the fictitious case they put; for it was not likely to be a true one. The Jews were adverse to the fulfilling of that Law, at all; which would have rendered its frequent repetition very improbable, especially in the case of deaths so extraordinary. But the objection, superficial as it is, has in it something not only of sensual levity, but also of coarseness and turpitude. Sensuality blinds the eyes, so as to create these apparently absurd difficulties; and the carnally minded man cannot imagine the future life to be any thing but carnal."^(s) For it will be perceived that the present difficulty "rested entirely upon the notion that the connections of this Life must be continued in another."^(t) This notion, therefore, our Lord proceeds to remove, by declaring that the condition of men's bodies, after the Resurrection, will be no longer the same as it was in Life.

24, 25 And JESUS answering said unto them, Do ye not therefore err, because ye know not the Scriptures, neither the power of God? for when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the Angels which are in Heaven.

Take notice that the Sadducees, not only "say that there is no Resurrection,"^(u) but—"neither Angel nor Spirit."^(x) The Lord of Angels and "Father of Spirits" proceeds therefore to combat the whole of their Heresy.

It does not seem to be implied by what is stated in verse 24, that what follows is found anywhere in the Old Testament. This statement concerning the Bodies of the Saints is one of the new things revealed to Man in the Gospel; and amounts to a declaration that the "spiritual body" will not be liable to the same passions as the "natural body."^(y) "We shall be changed;" and a part of that change will consist in our ennobled bodily functions. "When this corruptible shall have put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality,"^(z) we shall find ourselves no longer bound down by carnal desires: but shall share that loftier state, which is the state of Angels.

Reason alone might indeed suffice to convince us that "when men shall rise from the dead, they neither marry nor are given in marriage;" for the end of Marriage is the procreation of Children, as the Church is careful to remind us. "We marry, to the end that that which Death consumes, Birth may replenish: therefore, where the Law of Death is taken away, the cause of Birth is taken away likewise."^(a) Indeed, our Lord states this in express words in St. Luke's Gospel: they "neither marry nor are given in marriage," He says, "for neither are they any longer capable of dying."^(b)

All this, it will be perceived, does not touch the subject of *recognition* in a future state; concerning which, no reasonable doubt can be entertained. Neither is it the question here whether the union of Husband and Wife will continue to subsist in the Life to come; but only concerning the character which that union will assume.

Further, we have to notice our Lord's assurance that the error of the Sadducees arose out of their ignorance, (1st.) of Scripture; and (2d.) of the power of God. He does not reprove them for receiving nothing of Scripture but the five Books of the Law; but, for not apprehending the Divine Mind even *there*. It is sufficiently remarkable, that the very precept of Moses which they had just now appealed to, was intended by God to convey the very Doctrine which these men were seeking to refute. But this has been noticed already.^(c)

(s) Williams.

(u) See above, ver. 18.

(y) 1 Cor. xv. 44.

(a) Pseudo-Chrysostom. Augustine has almost the same words.

(b) St. Luke xx. 36. This is overlooked in our English version.

(c) See above, the note on ver. 19.

(t) Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale.

(x) Acts xxiii. 8.

(z) Ibid. ver. 52, 54.

Having thus disposed of their question, the Blessed Speaker proceeds to convict them of error out of their own Books. They had brought forward the name of Moses in order to perplex *Him*; He therefore in turn brings forward the same great name in order to confute *them*: saying,

26 And as touching the dead, that they rise: have ye not read in the book of Moses, how in the bush God spake unto him, saying, I *am* the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob?

How startling is the recollection that Christ Himself was the Speaker(*d*) on the occasion alluded to:(*e*) and that we here behold Him, after an interval of more than fifteen hundred years, interpreting His own words!

27 He is not the God of the dead, but the God of the living: ye therefore do greatly err.

This is not human reasoning, but Divine. The force of it does not at once strike us. The obvious answer of the carnal mind would be, first, that the expression "the God of Abraham" might only mean the God whom Abraham worshipped; and next, that, even if it implied the present life of the Patriarch, it would not seem of necessity to imply the future Resurrection of his body from death, also.

Then, further, it might create surprise that a text bearing only indirectly, (as it seems,) on the Doctrine of the Resurrection should have been selected, while so many striking passages are at hand, (in the Books of Job and of Daniel for instance,)(*f*) which distinctly assert the doctrine. To this, however, it will be a partial answer if we point out that the unbelieving Sadducees rejected the entire Canon of Scripture except the five Books of Moses. "There does not appear any just reason, however, for supposing that our Lord was adducing in these words the strongest declaration of that Doctrine which the Pentateuch could supply. May we not rather consider it as an argument that the doctrine did not require any such express verbal proof at all? For, of course, if it had been needed, He could have at once supplied it in the fullness and closeness of the written letter. Or, if not there already supplied, could have so spoken in the Old Testament, as to have met at once this occasion; things present and future being equally one and the same to Him. For we must remember *who* it is that explains and interprets; it is He who spake by the Prophets, and who in so speaking well knew every occasion on which the words would be needed. It were indeed something bordering on profaneness to suppose any deficiency of proof, or weakness of argument, such as fell short of what the occasion required. Our Lord must rather be considered as supplying His enemies with the Law of Scriptural Interpretation, and as furnishing the key which would admit them into the Treasures of the Holy Writings, which as yet they knew not."(*g*)

But the most surprising thing, after all, seems to be that our Lord's reasoning silenced the Sadducees; and therefore, was deemed by those unbelieving men if not satisfactory, at least unanswerable. The suspicion arises, that neither do *we* understand the Scriptures. Nay, we are conscious that it requires an effort of mind to embrace even our Lord's Divine Interpretation of them. For as Faith alone could dictate, so Faith alone can receive such an admirable exposition of His Reasoning, as the following: "With the force of our Lord's argument," says Bp. Pearson, "the multitude was astonished, and the Sadducees silenced. For under the name of God was understood a great Benefactor, a God of promise; and to be 'their God,' was to bless them, and to reward them: as to be 'His Servants and His People,' was to believe in Him, and to obey Him. Now Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob had not received the promises, which they expected; and therefore God, after their death, desiring still to be called their God, thereby acknowledgeth that He hath a blessing and a reward in store for them still; and consequently that He will raise them to another Life, in which they may receive it. So that the argument of our Saviour is the same which the Jews have drawn from another place of Moses, where God says 'I have established My covenant with them,' (namely with Abraham, with Isaac, and with Jacob,) 'to give them the Land of Canaan.'(*h*) It is not said 'to give their sons,' but 'to give *them* the Land of Canaan;' and therefore, since while

(*d*) See the note on St. Matth. xv. 27.

(*f*) Job xix. 25, 26, 27. Daniel xii. 2.

(*e*) Exod. iii. 6.

(*g*) Williams.

(*h*) Exod. vi. 3, 4.

they lived here they enjoyed it not, they must live again that they may receive the promise."

It is a striking remark of the Hebrew Doctors, that nowhere in the Scripture is God styled the God of any person during the days of his earthly life.

Then, besides the Doctrine of the Soul's Immortality, we find it here implied that juster notions of God would have led the Sadducees to accept the Doctrine of the Resurrection of the Body, also. A deeper insight into the fullness of Scripture, would have led them to expect that those who live with Him now, will hereafter have their "perfect consummation and bliss, both in *Body* and *Soul*;"(i) while a more perfect knowledge of God's Power would have removed the obstacle opposed by unassisted Reason to that sublime Doctrine; "for, to the natural man, who judges merely from known laws of Nature, the Resurrection of the Body is, of course, impossible." When our SAVIOUR CHRIST says that "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living," He teaches us that God is "not the God of the dead, *as dead*; but *as by His Power He can revive them*, and rule them when they live."(k)

The entire incident leads us to inquire what *other* places in the Pentateuch might be cited as containing these two great Doctrines? And we are reminded that it is said of Abraham, of Isaac, and of Jacob, after their death, not only that they were buried, but that they were "*gathered to their people*;"(l) by which phrase, the continued existence of the departed is clearly implied.(m) While that saying of the LORD unto Moses, "Thou shalt *sleep* with thy Fathers,"(n) as clearly implies the Doctrine of the Resurrection; for where there has been a sleeping, there must also follow a waking—when that which lay down in weakness shall rise again in power.

One of the "Scribes next comes forward: a class of men concerning whom something will be found in the notes on St. Mark iii. 22. But from a comparison of this place with the narrative which answers to it in the earlier Gospel,(o) it will be found that he was a *Pharisee*. It will appear therefore that these implacable enemies of CHRIST no sooner discover that their rivals have been put to silence, than they put forward one of their own Scribes to molest the Holy One. It follows,

28 And one of the Scribes came, and having heard them reasoning together, and perceiving that He had answered them well, asked Him, Which is the first commandment of all?

This he said, according to St. Matthew,(p) "*tempting Him*;" an expression which generally denotes an evil frame of mind in the speaker. But our LORD's language in verse 34, below, induces the belief that this man's inquiry was dictated merely by curiosity.(q) He wished to hear how this wonderful Speaker would decide respecting a famous question which was much discussed among the most learned of the nation.

29, 30 And JESUS answered him, The first of all the commandments *is*, Hear, O Israel: the LORD our GOD is one LORD: and thou shalt love the LORD thy GOD with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind, and with all thy strength: this *is* the first Commandment.

It will be observed that the first part of the admirable summary of Man's "duty toward's God" contained in the Catechism, is derived from *this* place of Scripture, rather than from any other; and still more exactly does it follow the Scribe's rewording of the matter, in verse 33.

With all thy heart, soul, mind, strength: "Keep *thy heart* with all diligence, for out of it are the issues of Life."(r) "As the heart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my *soul* after Thee, O God."(s) "Thou wilt keep him in perfect Peace,

(i) Burial Service.

(k) Bp. Pearson.

(l) Gen. xxv. 9, 8:—xxxv. 29:—xlix. 29, 33: 1. 13. See also Gen. xxv. 17.

(m) Consider Gen. xv. 15: xxxvii. 35, and Numb. xx. 24: xxvii. 13: xxxi. 2. Also, Job xxvii. 19.

(n) Deut. xxxi. 16.

(o) See St. Matth. xxii. 34, 35.

(p) St. Matth. xxii. 35.

(q) Compare 1 Kings x. 1.

(r) Prov. iv. 23. Consider Ps. li. 10: lvii. 7: lxvi. 18: cix. 22: cxix. 36, &c.

(s) Ps. xlii. 1. Consider Ps. xxxiv. 2: lvii. 1, &c. St. Luke i. 46, &c.

whose *mind* is stayed on Thee.”(t) And,—“Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy *might*.”(u)

But our SAVIOUR does more than answer the question of the Scribe. He adds to “the first commandment of all,” the second likewise.

31 And the second *is* like, *namely* this, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself. There is none other commandment greater than these.

“The first is found in Deuteronomy vi. 4, 5,—a remarkable instance of a *spiritual* requirement: “the second,” in Leviticus xix. 18.—And this, our LORD says, resembles the first: resembles it, in that to one of these two Commands every other duty may be referred; resembles it, also, in that Love is the end of both. “For all the Law is fulfilled in one word, even in this,—Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself.”(x) But on the words “the second is like,” the Reader is referred to a long note on St. Matthew xxii. 39.

It will be seen from St. Luke x. 25 to 27, that these two precepts had been already quoted, and in very nearly the self-same words, as a summary of the whole Law, by a Scribe (or Lawyer) to whom our SAVIOUR put a question not unlike that which was here addressed to Himself. What are we to infer from this curious circumstance?

32, 33 And the Scribe said unto Him, Well, Master, Thou hast said the truth: for there is one GOD; and there is none other but He: and to love Him with all the heart, and with all the understanding, and with all the soul, and with all the strength, and to love *his* neighbour as himself, is more than all whole burnt offerings and sacrifices.

A very noble saying, truly; and which may well warrant the pleasing belief that he who came “tempting”(y) CHRIST, went away inclined to become His disciple. And yet, as was pointed out in the preceding note, our SAVIOUR had delivered no new precept: nay, He had replied to the Scribe’s inquiry in the very words of the Scribes themselves. Was it then perhaps the manner and dignity of the Divine Speaker which overcame him? and because (as even the rough soldiery confessed) “never man spake like this Man?”(z)

Take notice of the air of *authority* which pervades the Scribe’s words. He speaks like a great and learned Doctor of the Law. His concluding words moreover reveal *which* commandment, in the opinion of some, was “the first.”

34 And when JESUS saw that he answered discreetly, He said unto him, Thou art not far from the Kingdom of GOD.

The perception of Divine Truth which his answer had evinced, showed that he wanted little to become a Disciple of CHRIST.

And no man after that durst ask Him *any* question.

35, 36, 37 And JESUS answered and said, while He taught in the Temple, How say the Scribes that CHRIST is the Son of David? for David himself said, by the HOLY GHOST, The LORD said to my LORD, Sit Thou on My right hand, till I make Thine enemies Thy footstool. David therefore himself calleth Him LORD: and whence is He *then* his son? And the common people heard Him gladly.

The reader is referred to the notes on St. Luke’s Gospel (xx. 40 to 44,) concerning these verses.

38, 39, 40 And He said unto them in His doctrine, Beware of the Scribes, which love to go in long clothing, and *love* salutations in the

(t) Is. xxvi. 3: where see the margin. Consider further, Prov. i. 2, &c. St. John xvii. 3, &c.
(u) Eccles. ix. 10. Consider Dan. x. 19. 1 Cor. xvi. 13. Eph. vi. 10. 2 Tim. ii. 1. Rev. iii. 15, 16, &c.

(x) Gal. v. 14. Compare Rom. xiii. 8 to 10. (y) See above, the note on verse 23.

(z) St. John vii. 46.

market-places, and the chief seats in the synagogues, and the uppermost rooms at feasts: which devour widows' houses, and for a pretence make long prayers: these shall receive greater damnation.

This does but form part of the long and withering address which fills a whole chapter (the 23d) in St. Matthew's Gospel: see the notes on verses 5, 6 and 14.—A touching incident follows:

41, 42, 43, 44 And JESUS sat over against the Treasury, and beheld how the people cast money into the Treasury: and many that were rich cast in much. And there came a certain poor Widow, and she threw in two mites, which make a farthing. And He called *unto Him* His disciples, and saith unto them, Verily I say unto you, that this poor Widow hath cast more in, than all they which have cast into the Treasury: for all *they* did cast in of their abundance; but she, of her want, did cast in all that she had, *even* all her living.

This incident will be found remarked upon in the Commentary on St. Luke's Gospel,—xxi. 1 to 4. It shall suffice in this place to observe how entirely the point of the transaction is lost sight of, when men in common speech talk of "giving their mite." They mean thereby to imply that they have cast in a very small sum; (and probably so they have;) whereas the *Widow's* "mite" was "*all that she had, even all her living.*"

CHAPTER XIII.

1 CHRIST foretelleth the destruction of the Temple. 9 The persecutions for the Gospel. 10 That the Gospel must be preached to all nations. 14 That great calamities shall happen to the Jews. 24 And the manner of His coming to Judgment. 32 The hour whereof being known to none, every man is to watch and pray, that we be not found unprovided, when He cometh to each one particularly by death.

1 AND as He went out of the Temple, one of His Disciples saith unto Him, Master, see what manner of stones and what buildings *are here!*

Our LORD was departing from the Temple for the last time, when this remark was made to Him by one of the Blessed Company who attended Him. The solemnity of the occasion has been pointed out in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 1. It is easy to understand that, from the words He had last uttered, (a) the Disciples may have "caught some general impression and dark foreboding of the fate which awaited the Temple: and it seems to have been in consequence of those expressions that, as He was in the act of departing from it, they made the remark on its beautiful structure, as if to express their surprise, or to win His commiseration." The immense size of the magnificent white stones to which the Disciples called our

(a) St. Matth. xxiii. 36 to 39.

SAVIOUR's attention, is noticed by Josephus. He says they were twenty-five cubits long, eight cubits high, and twelve broad. Some of the stones, he says, were forty cubits (that is, sixty feet) long.

2 And JESUS answering said unto him, Seest thou these great buildings? there shall not be left one stone upon another, that shall not be thrown down.

Not only was the Temple consumed by fire to its very foundations, but the soil received afterwards the customary marks of subjection. "Zion was *ploughed as a field*, and Jerusalem became heaps, and the mountain of the House as the high places of the forest." (b) "Where is now that great City?" (asked a Jew, immediately after the taking of Jerusalem :) "It is now demolished to the very foundations, and preserves no monument of itself but the camp of those who have destroyed it, which still dwells upon its ruins. Some unfortunate old men also lie upon the ashes of the Temple. I cannot but wish that we had all died before we had seen the foundations of our Holy Temple dug up after so profane a manner." See more in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 2.

The prediction in the text, which our Blessed Lord had also delivered on a former occasion, (c)—though fully in accordance with the tenor of His recent discourses and teaching, (d)—may well have perplexed the Disciples. Not only did it seem *unlikely* that such a magnificent structure as the second Temple should experience such a total overthrow as their Divine Master predicted, but they may have called to remembrance a sure word of Prophecy, which proved at least that a period of great glory had been reserved, in the deep counsels of God, for that very Temple:—"The desire of all nations shall come, and I will fill this House with Glory, saith the Lord of Hosts. . . . The Glory of this latter House shall be greater than of the former, saith the Lord of Hosts, and in this place I will give Peace, saith the Lord of Hosts." (e) Little did they realize the solemn truth that already had "the Glory" come, and "departed!" (f)—that the Incarnate Son was the true *Shekinah*, (g) who had suddenly come to His Temple, and had now crossed its threshold for the last time!

3, 4 And as He sat upon the mount of Olives over against the Temple, Peter and James and John and Andrew asked Him privately, Tell us, when shall these things be? and what *shall be* the sign when all these things shall be fulfilled?

St. Mark is the only Evangelist who mentions the number and the names of the Disciples who came to CHRIST as He sat on the Mount, with this memorable question. Their Divine Lord was sitting "*over against the Temple*,"—the chief object, it may well be thought, of their solicitude. But the question they addressed to Him, St. Mark only partially records. The Reader will do well to refer to what has been already offered on this subject in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 3.

5, 6 And JESUS answering them began to say, Take heed lest any *man* deceive you: for many shall come in My name, saying, I am CHRIST: and shall deceive many.

Thus then our Lord begins His reply with a general prophecy of Antichrist, who was to precede the destruction of Jerusalem; as we know that he will (in some far more signal manner) precede the end of the World. (h) This is the first "sign when all these things shall be fulfilled," with which He supplied His Church. It is mentioned again in verses 21, 22; which places seem to be distinctly referred to by St. John, in his Epistle. (i) See more in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 5.

7, 8 And when ye shall hear of wars and rumors of wars, be ye not

(b) Micah iii. 12, which is quoted by Jer. xxvi. 18.

(c) St. Luke xix. 41.

(d) Consider St. Matth. xxi. 41, 43: xxii. 7: xxiii. 37, 39.

(e) Hag. ii. 7, 9.

(f) 1 Sam. iv. 21.

(g) See St. John i. 14.

(h) See 2 Thess. 1 to 10, and the places referred to in the note on St. Matth. xxiv. 26.

(i) St. John ii. 18: iv. 3. Compare 2 St. John, verse 7.

troubled: for *such things* must needs be; but the end *shall* not be yet. For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be earthquakes in divers places, and there shall be famines and troubles: these *are* the beginnings of sorrows.

These verses will be found discussed in the notes on St. Luke xxi. 11, and St. Matthew xxiv. 8.

9 But take heed to yourselves: for they shall deliver you up to councils; and in the synagogues ye shall be beaten: and ye shall be brought before Rulers and Kings for My sake, for a testimony against them.

That is, "That you may bear witness of My Religion in their presence." (7) All which was fulfilled in the recorded history of the Eleven Apostles, (m)—of St. Paul, (n)—and of the other Disciples, (o) But, as it has been truly remarked, we must understand this part of our Lord's prophecy, (which He had already delivered in His Charge to the Twelve,) (p) as relating "not so much to those sufferings of the Apostles and their first followers, which are related in the Acts, as to those general persecutions of the Christians which took place at a later period. It was particularly fulfilled in that great persecution which was carried on by the Emperor Nero, about three years before the Destruction of Jerusalem; and in which, among many others, St. Peter and St. Paul suffered martyrdom." (q)

10 And the Gospel must first be published among all nations.

"And then shall the end," that is, the destruction of Jerusalem, "come;"—as it is said in St. Matthew's Gospel. (r) For "out of Sion," it had been predicted, "shall go forth the Law, and the Word of the Lord from Jerusalem;" (s) and "from the rising of the sun, even unto the going down of the same, My Name shall be great among the Gentiles." (t) How truly this prophecy was fulfilled, even in the age of the Apostles, has been pointed out in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 14; for the Gospel was then published throughout the Roman Empire, which certainly included the far greater portion of the then known world,—“from the mouth of the Rhine, to the border of Ethiopia; from Gades, to the banks of Euphrates.” (u)

11 But when they shall lead *you*, and deliver you up, take no thought beforehand what ye shall speak, neither do ye premeditate: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the HOLY GHOST.

The Reader is referred concerning this verse to the note on St. Luke xxi. 15. Compare the place with St. Matth. x. 19, 20, (where the note should be read,) and St. Luke xii. 11, 12: and take notice that the two next verses are found to have been transcribed by the present Evangelist word for word from our Lord's Charge to His Twelve Apostles in the x. Chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel. (x)

12, 13 Now the brother shall betray the brother to death, and the father the son; and children shall rise up against *their* parents, and shall cause them to be put to death. And ye shall be hated of all *men* for My Name's sake: but he that shall endure unto the end, the same shall be saved.

The fulfillment of the prophecy in ver. 12, is noticed by a Roman Historian. Concerning the last words of ver. 13, which recur twice in the Gospels, (y) the reader is referred to the note on St. Matth. xxiv. 13. The first Christians are accordingly found to have speedily become known as a sect which was "everywhere spoken

(7) Burton. Compare St. Luke xxi. 13, and note.

(m) Acts iv. 3: v. 18, 40: xii. 4, &c.

(o) Acts vii. 59, &c.

(p) St. Matth. x. 17, 18.

(q) Archd. Hale and Bp. Lonsdale. (r) St. Matth. xxiv. 14.

(s) Isaiah ii. 3.

(t) Mal. i. 11.

(u) Churton.

(x) See St. Matth. x. 21, 22,—in the original Greek.

(y) 2 Cor. xi. 24, 25, &c.

(z) St. Matth. x. 22: xxiv. 13.

against:"(z) and it was for CHRIST'S "Name sake,"—"that worthy Name by the which" from the first "they were called."(a)

Thus far then, our LORD has been describing what should be the remoter signs of the coming destruction of Jerusalem, as well as what should be the sufferings of the first believers in the mean time.(b) He proceeds to indicate what should be the sign that the end had actually arrived:—

14 But when ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing where it ought not, (let him that readeth understand,) then let them that be in Judæa flee to the mountains:

The standards of the Roman army, with their abominated ensigns of idolatry, standing on the sacred soil round about the City,—was to be the special signal for flight to the Christians. This has been more fully explained in the notes on St. Matthew xxiv. 15, and St. Luke xxi. 22. Some points of resemblance between the destruction of Jerusalem and the overthrow of Sodom have been pointed out in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 18. The injunction to "escape to the mountain,"(c) which preceeds, joined with the precepts which follow, forcibly recall the parallel doom of those two cities.

15 And let him that is on the housetop not go down into the house, neither enter *therein*, to take any thing out of his house:

He was not to "go down into the house" on any account,—nor to "enter to take any thing out" of it. The Houses in Palestine were furnished with an external flight of steps,—by which the housetop could be reached without actually entering the house. This explains the manner in which the paralytic borne of four was brought to CHRIST,—as was shown in the note on St. Luke v. 19.

16 and let him that is in the field not turn back again for to take up his garment.

A remarkable intimation of the greatness of the peril of that hour: when the guilty City, like another Sodom, should be marked for destruction. Indeed, the resemblance between those two cities in respect of wickedness, struck even the Jewish historian Josephus. Hence, in an earlier part of St. Luke's Gospel, when our LORD is speaking of these same dangers, it will be remarked that He sums up these injunctions, which He here repeats, with that striking word of warning,—“Remember Lot's wife!”(d) And take notice that as, at the destruction of Sodom, the little town of Zoar was provided for the escape of Lot and his family,(e) so now Pella in Peræa, at a distance of about a hundred miles, was provided to be a retreat for the Christians from Jerusalem. Moreover, as Lot was warned to "escape to the mountain,"(f) so were the Disciples now. And it may be that this, or the like mystical teaching, lies concealed beneath other of these injunctions of our LORD; which in their highly symbolic character remind us somewhat of His sayings to the Twelve, when first He sent them forth.(g)

17 But woe to them that are with child, and to them that give suck in those days!

For Mothers, "more alive to pain, and less able to bear it, endured the more; seeing their children expire before their eyes." Josephus, describing the horrors of the siege, says of the robbers and assassins who forced their way into houses, that they showed no compassion "either to the aged or to infants; but lifted up children from the ground, as they hung upon the morsels they had gotten, and shook them down upon the floor."

But if the reference here be to those who are counselled to have recourse to flight, the meaning of the compassionate exclamation in the text, becomes self-evident.(h)

(z) Acts xxviii. 22.

(a) See Acts xi. 26: xxvi. 28. 1 St. Peter iv. 16, and St. James ii. 7.

(b) Verse 5 to verse 8: and verse 9 to verse 13.

(c) Compare the end of verse 11 with Gen. xix. 17.

(d) Gen. xix. 20 to 22.

(e) See the note on St. Matth. x. 10.

(d) St. Luke xvii. 31, 32.

(f) Gen. xix. 19.

(h) See the note on St. Luke xxi. 23.

18 And pray ye that your flight be not in the winter.

"Neither," adds St. Matthew, "on the Sabbath Day." See the note on the place.(i)

19 For *in* those days shall be affliction, such as was not from the beginning of the creation which God created unto this time, neither shall be.

The siege of Jerusalem was indeed attended with unexampled horrors, as well as the most appalling wickedness. It is truly surprising to find the Jewish historian Josephus, who was an eye-witness of the sufferings which our LORD here predicts, stating it as his opinion "that the misfortunes of all men, *from the beginning of the world*, if they be compared to these of the Jews, are not so considerable as theirs were;" "nor did any age ever breed a generation more fruitful in wickedness *from the beginning of the world*. Not only did civil strife rage within the City, but three powerful factions contended for the mastery with such violence and hate, that captivity seemed a far inferior evil to the actual sufferings of the inhabitants. The city was densely crowded, in consequence of the multitudes which had come up to the Feast of the Passover. Pestilence ensued; and, in consequence of the destruction of their stores by fire, Famine followed shortly after. The very instincts of humanity seemed to forsake the people. Women snatched the food from the mouths of their husbands and children. The most revolting acts of violence were practised without remorse and without rebuke: barbarities were perpetrated too disgraceful even to be described. The Houses, the very streets of the city, were filled with dead bodies,—which armed assassins rifled, and mangled with fiendish exultation. So excessive was the stench, that it became necessary to hurl above six hundred thousand corpses over the walls. Meantime, the besieged were reduced to such extremity, that they gladly ate not only their belts and shoes, but the very filth of the streets. One woman, a mother, as if unconscious of natural instinct, killed, roasted, and devoured her infant son,—deliberately reserving half for a second meal. So monstrous an iniquity had been foretold in prophecy for fifteen hundred years.(k) "I cannot but speak my mind," says Josephus, after taking a survey of the extreme wickedness of his countrymen, "and it is this: I suppose that if the Romans had delayed to come against these sinners, either the Earth would have swallowed them up, or the city would have been swept away by another Flood, or it would have been consumed, like a second Sodom, by fire from Heaven." Ninety-seven thousand captives were taken during the war; and there perished in the siege above eleven hundred thousand men.

20 And except that the LORD had shortened those days, no flesh should be saved: but for the elect's sake, whom He hath chosen, He hath shortened the days.

By "the elect" are here clearly meant the Christians: and it seems to be implied that the prolongation of the horrors of the siege of Jerusalem were disastrous, as well to those Christians who had escaped from the city, as to those who remained immured within it. Nor is it hard, in part at least, to understand how this may have been the case. Their unbelieving friends and kindred were cooped up within those fated walls; and on them, many of "the elect" will have depended for the very means of subsistence: while Famine, or Pestilence, or the sword was daily threatening the lives of those whose safety was precious to them, almost as their own. Provision must have been scant, and the fruits of the earth gathered in with risk and difficulty. There was danger also lest the exasperated conquerors should have pushed the war into the provinces, and assailed Pella itself as well as the other cities of Perea. In the meanwhile, bands of assassins and robbers infested Judea, so that the lives of all were endangered; and but for a summary close put to the deeds of violence which every day brought forth, the utter desolation of the country might have been anticipated. These men, says Josephus, "were agreed

(i) On St. Matth. xxiv. 20.

(k) Deut. xxviii. 56, 57. Levit. xxvi. 29. It seems to have also happened on two earlier occasions,—namely in B. C. 892,—see 2 Kings vi. 29: and in B. C. 588,—see Ezek. v. 10: Lam. iv. 10; Jer. xix. 9.

only in their determination to put to death as many as deserved safety and protection :” a fearful prospect for the Disciples of CHRIST ! For whatever reason, it was mercifully promised that “ those days should be shortened.”

And shortened they were,—not less by the activity and enterprise of the assailing enemy than by the madness of the assailed. Titus, on his part, (“ swift as the eagle flieth !”) ^(l) encircled the City with a wall five miles in extent, and fortified with thirteen large garrisons, in the almost incredibly short space of three days. ^(m) His impatience to bring the siege to a close is specially noticed by Josephus. On the other hand, the seditious inhabitants slew the men who would have taught them how the siege might have been protracted ; burnt the corn which would have enabled them to hold out against the enemy ; and abandoned the towers which were in fact impregnable. Thus the City which in the time of Zedekiah had endured a siege of twelve months, was captured by the Romans in less than five.

21, 22, 23 And then if any man shall say to you, Lo, here is CHRIST ; or, lo, *He* is there ; believe *him* not : for false Christs and false Prophets shall rise, and shall show signs and wonders, to seduce, if *it were* possible, even the elect. But take ye heed : behold, I have foretold you all things.

In the Commentary on St. Matthew’s Gospel, these verses will be found discussed at some length. ⁽ⁿ⁾ The Reader is recommended to refer this part of our LORD’s prophecy not altogether to the latter days ; but to view it as conceived in language which was equally applicable to the period immediately succeeding the Destruction of Jerusalem. Whatever may be thought of these three verses however, what follows certainly has reference to the end of the World ; and the expression “ in those days ” must be taken in that large signification which the phrase is known to bear in other places.

24, 25, 26, 27 But in those days, after that tribulation, the Sun shall be darkened, and the Moon shall not give her light, and the Stars of Heaven shall fall, and the powers that are in Heaven shall be shaken. And then shall they see the Son of Man coming in the clouds with great power and glory. And then shall He send His angels, and shall gather together His elect from the four winds, from the uttermost part of the earth, to the uttermost part of Heaven.

Such are the promised “ signs ” of CHRIST’s final Coming. The remoter signs of that event precede, in verses 21 to 23 : the two next verses, (24 and 25,) describe the tokens of His immediate approach. They have been discussed already in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 29. See also, concerning verses 26, 27, above, the notes on St. Matthew xxiv. 30, 31.

28, 29 Now learn a parable of the fig tree ; when her branch is yet tender, and putteth forth leaves, ye know that summer is near : so ye in like manner, when ye shall see these things come to pass, know that it is nigh, *even* at the doors.

Rather, “ *He* is nigh,”—as explained in the note on St. Matthew xxiv. 33 : which see. In St. Luke’s Gospel, the expression takes even a more interesting turn : “ Behold the fig tree, and all the trees : when they now shoot forth, ye see and know of your own selves that summer is now nigh at hand.” ^(o) By which words our LORD teaches men, as He was accustomed to do, ^(p) to apply the same observation to the things of Grace as to the things of Nature ; and so to make advances in the knowledge of Heavenly Truth.

But the difficulty arises,—If the approach of the end is to be thus gradual ; and if it is to be preceded (like Summer) by many a well-known sign : how then will it be sudden and unforeseen, as our LORD elsewhere declares ? ^(q) How will the Day

(l) Deut. xxviii. 49.

(n) St. Matth. xxiv. 25 and 26.

(o) St. Luke xxi. 29, 30.

(p) St. Matth. xxiv. 41 : xxv. 13. St. Mark xiii. 35 to 37, &c.

(m) See St. Luke xix. 43.

(p) St. Matth. xvi. 2, 3.

of the LORD "so come as a thief in the night?"(r) This apparent contradiction is of course none, in reality; but full of heavenly teaching when rightly understood. "The judgments of God do almost always overtake sinners unawares; yet it might be shown by a great induction of instances, that they never come without distinct warnings from God."(s) The Flood took mankind by surprise: yet had they one hundred and twenty years of warning. And this event is made the very type of the great and terrible day.(t)

30 Verily I say unto you, that this generation shall not pass, till all these things be done.

31 Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but My Words shall not pass away.

Thus does our LORD prophesy that the Fall of Jerusalem, (which He designates by the phrase "these things,") should be no distant event: and it came to pass in forty years. It was declared in like manner of their forefathers in the wilderness, that God "made them wander forty years, until *all the generation* was consumed:"(u) and the selfsame period of forty years was to elapse before "*this generation*" had passed, and "all these things" were fulfilled.—Our SAVIOUR proceeds to say something concerning "the Day and Hour" of His second coming, and of the end of the World. See more about these verses in the notes on St. Matthew xxiv. 35, and St. Luke xxi. 33.

32 But of that day and *that* hour knoweth no man, no, not the Angels which are in Heaven, neither the SON, but the FATHER.

Hence we learn that Angels, "which are greater in power and might,"(x) surpass us in knowledge also. The *limit* of their knowledge is noticed in other places of Scripture besides the present; and thereto is added the assurance that they desire to increase their stores.(y) Far more interesting however, and amazing too, is the statement which follows, that there were things known unto the FATHER which were hid even from the SON. But of course it was only *as the Son of Man* that anything could be unknown to Him which was known to the FATHER: since, (as He said, "I and My FATHER are One."(z) We cannot *explain* the statement of the text; for the union of the Divine and Human Nature in the one Person of CHRIST is a mystery altogether unfathomable, and which stands alone. Yet may it be pointed out that the words under consideration are in conformity with many other mysterious passages in the Gospel: as *that* which speaks of our LORD's "*increase in Wisdom*" as well as in Stature;(a) His many recorded acts of prayer;(b) His claim to have been sent with a commandment from the FATHER;(c) not to insist upon those many hints of the greatness of His Humiliation, which are scattered up and down the Gospel, and with no sparing hand.(d)

33, 34 Take ye heed, watch and pray; for ye know not when the time is. *For the Son of Man* is as a man taking a far journey, who left His house, and gave authority to His Servants, and to every man his work, and commanded the Porter to watch.

CHRIST is here spoken of,—"*whose House are we,*" says St. Paul.(e) When He left His Church, did He not give to His Servants, the Apostles, "*authority,*" as before, on first sending them forth, He had done?(f) and to every man, gave He not "*His work,*"—"unto one, five talents, to another two, and to another one: to every man according to his several ability?"(g) "The Porter" seems to be again darkly alluded to in St. John x. 3.

35, 36, 37 Watch ye therefore: for ye know not when the Master

(r) 1 Thess. v. 2: 2 St. Peter iii. 10, &c.

(t) St. Matthew xxiv. 37 to 39: St. Luke xvii. 26, 27, 30.

(x) 2 St. Peter ii. 11.

(z) St. John x. 30.

(b) St. Matthew xiv. 23: xxvi. 39, 42 to 44: St. Luke vi. 12, &c.

(d) St. Matthew xxvii. 46: St. Luke xxii. 42, 44, &c.

(f) St. Luke ix. 1.

(s) Williams.

(u) Numb. xxxii. 13.

(y) 1 St. Peter i. 12. See Eph. iii. 10.

(a) St. Luke ii. 52.

(c) St. John xiv. 31.

(e) Heb. iii. 6.

(g) St. Matth. xxv. 14, 15.

of the House cometh, at even, or at midnight, or at the cockerowing, or in the morning: lest coming suddenly he find you sleeping. And what I say unto you I say unto all, Watch.

These three verses may be regarded as a brief summary of that which St. Matthew has recorded in such ample detail, from chap. xxiv. 42 to the 30th verse of the next chapter.

Those who listen most attentively to the warning of the Gospel, says an ancient Father, *(h)* "are not much solicitous concerning the end of the World; but this alone they consider, that the end of each individual is such that he himself knows neither the day nor the hour of his departure; and that on every one of us the Day of the Lord will so come as a thief. On which account it is necessary for each to watch, whether it be in the evening, that is in youth; or at midnight, that is in the middle of life; or at cock-crowing, when he is now more advanced in years; or in the morning, when he is now in old age." For the Jewish night was divided into four watches. "Why," as another ancient writer truly asks, "why does He say to all, what belongs only to those who shall be then alive, if it be not that it belongs to all? The last Day comes to each man, when his time comes for departing from this life; and for this reason every Christian ought to watch, lest the Advent of his Lord find him unprepared. The Last Day will find that man unprepared whom *the last day of life finds unprepared.*" *(i)* So entirely do these ancient writers confirm the heading of the present chapter: "Every man is to watch and pray, that we be not found unprovided, when He cometh to each one particularly by Death."

This, which may be called the *practical* view of our Lord's second Advent, it concerns us all especially to cherish. It was for such a coming of CHRIST that the beloved Disciple was instructed by his Lord to "tarry." "If I will that he tarry *till I come*, what is that to thee?" *(k)*—"Even so, come, LORD JESUS!" *(l)* are the words with which the same Disciple testifies his expectation of the Day when CHRIST should fulfill His solemn promise.

CHAPTER XIV.

1 *A conspiracy against CHRIST.* 3 *Precious ointment is poured on His head by a woman.* 10 *Judas selleth his Master for money.* 12 *CHRIST Himself foretelleth how He shall be betrayed of one of His Disciples.* 22 *After the Passover prepared, and eaten, instituteth His Supper.* 26 *Declareth aforeshand the flight of all His Disciples, and Peter's denial.* 43 *Judas betrayeth Him with a kiss.* 46 *He is apprehended in the garden.* 53 *Falsely accused, and impiously condemned of the Jews' council.* 65 *Shamefully abused by them.* 66 *And thrice denied of Peter.*

It will be remembered that the preceding chapter contained our SAVIOUR'S wondrous prophecy concerning the destruction of Jerusalem, and the end of the World, — a transaction which it is reasonable to refer to the evening of Tuesday in Passover week. A day has elapsed since then. It is now Wednesday: and in conformity with the Hebrew mode of expression, it is added,—

1, 2 AFTER two days was *the feast of the Passover*, and of unleavened

(h) Origen.

(k) St. John xxi. 22.

(i) Augustine.

(l) Rev. xxii. 20.

bread: and the chief Priests and the Scribes sought how they might take Him by craft, and put *Him* to death. But they said, Not on the Feast *day*, lest there be an uproar of the people.

Enough has already been offered in illustration of these verses in the Commentary on St. Matthew xxvi. 2 and 5. It has been there pointed out that the beautiful incident which follows, is not introduced in strict historical order; and the reason has been assigned why the mention of it has been reserved for this place.

3 And being in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as He sat at meat, there came a woman having an alabaster box of ointment of spikenard very precious; and she brake the box, and poured *it* on His head.

¶ [Her impatient Love could not wait till the precious ointment should slowly distill itself, drop by drop, on the Head of the Holy One. She therefore brake the box,—whereby, as St. John declares, “the house was filled with the odour of the ointment.”(b)]

4, 5 And there were some that had indignation within themselves, and said, Why was this waste of the ointment made? For it might have been sold for more than three hundred pence, and have been given to the poor. And they murmured against her.

A few words on these three verses will be found in the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 6, 7, and 9.

6, 7, 8, 9 And JESUS said, Let her alone; why trouble ye her? she hath wrought a good work on Me. For ye have the poor with you always, and whensoever ye will ye may do them good: but Me ye have not always. She hath done what she could: she is come aforehand to anoint My Body to the burying. Verily I say unto you, Wheresoever this gospel shall be preached throughout the whole world, *this* also that she hath done shall be spoken of for a memorial of her.

It has been well observed that not only in respect of its striking fulfillment, is this a most remarkable saying; “but also as expressing, in the strongest manner, the very opposite views taken by our Lord and by His Disciples, of this woman’s action.”(c) As already remarked elsewhere, the Supper at Bethany has been reserved by St. Mark till now, in consequence of its connection with the event which follows, and in order to explain to the Reader what was the immediate occasion of that event.

10, 11 And Judas Iscariot, one of the Twelve, went unto the chief Priests, to betray Him unto them. And when they heard *it*, they were glad, and promised to give him money. And he sought how he might conveniently betray him.

It is observable that heinous offences committed against the Son of Man, cast their shadows far back into the Old Testament; and are either typically alluded to, or find distinct and unexpected mention there. The piercing of the side is one such incident:(d) the spitting is another.(e) Just so, the sin of Judas is found to have been on the lips of two of the ancient prophets; for Zechariah says, “They weighed for My price thirty pieces of silver;”(f) and St. Matthew declares that those words had been uttered “by Jeremy the prophet,”(g) who lived a hundred years earlier. Nor does the event even then for the first time shine out from the darkness. When Joseph was let down into the pit, and sold into Egypt by his brethren, at the insti-

(b) St. John xii. 3.

(c) Bp. Lonsdale and Archd. Hale.

(d) Consider Zech. xii. 10: (B. c. 487.) Numb. xx. 11, (B. c. 1453,) compared with 1 Cor. x. 4. Gen. ii. 21, 22, (B. c. 4004.)

(e) See below, the note on ver. 65.

(f) Zech. xi. 12.

(g) St. Matth. xxvii. 9, 10.

gation of another Judas, (and such coincidences of name are not accidental,) sold for twenty pieces of silver, *(h)*—*who* so blind as not to perceive that a greater than Joseph was there? that the crime committed against the Only Begotten Son was but receiving a first faint portraiture in the transaction of the twelve patriarchs? that it was the sin of Judas flinging its shadow back, as one may say, to the very beginning of Time.” *(i)*

12, 13, 14, 15 And the first day of unleavened bread, when they killed the Passover, his Disciples said unto Him, Where wilt Thou that we go and prepare that Thou mayest eat the Passover? And He sendeth forth two of His Disciples, and saith unto them, Go ye into the city, and there shall meet you a man bearing a pitcher of water: follow him. And wheresoever he shall go in, say ye to the goodman of the house, The Master saith, Where is the guest-chamber, where I shall eat the Passover with my Disciples? And he will show you a large upper room furnished *and* prepared: there make ready for us.

16 And His Disciples went forth, and came into the city, and found as He had said unto them: and they made ready the Passover.

A few remarks on what preceedes will be found in the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 17 and 19. The sign which guided St. John and St. Peter to the house where the *last* Paschal Supper, the *first* “Lord’s Supper,” was to be eaten, will be found remarked on in the note on St. Luke xxii. 10.

17 And in the evening He cometh with the Twelve.

18, 19 And as they sat and did eat, JESUS said, Verily I say unto you, One of you which eateth with Me shall betray Me. And they began to be sorrowful, and to say unto Him one by one, *Is it I?* and another *said, Is it I?*

20, 21 And He answered and said unto them, *It is* one of the Twelve that dippeth with Me in the dish. The Son of Man indeed goeth, as it is written of Him: but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! good were it for that man if he had never been born.

“Then Judas, which betrayed him,” adds St. Matthew, *(k)* “answered and said, Master, is it I? He said unto him, Thou hast said.”

In the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 20, 21, 22, 24 and 25, some brief remarks will be found on the preceding verses. It is related that those who assembled to celebrate the Paschal Supper, in the first place partook of a Cup of Wine: accordingly, St. Luke will be found to allude to such an observance on the present occasion. *(l)* Then followed a ceremonial washing: after which each of the guests ate some of the bitter herbs which were set before them, dipping them first into a peculiar kind of sauce which was served at the Paschal Supper. This seems to have been the manner in which the Holy One and his Twelve Apostles were actually engaged, when He spake the mournful prophecy recorded in ver. 18: and this must have been *that* “dipping in the dish” to which he alludes in ver. 20. It is further well worthy of observation, concerning the institution of the Lord’s Supper which follows, that our Blessed SAVIOUR invented no new ceremony, but sanctified and sublimed one already in existence. The Holy Eucharist grew out of the Jewish Feast of the Passover; or rather, it was engrafted upon it, and so supplanted it. Thus, it is related by ancient Jewish writers that after the ceremony already described, the Paschal Supper began as it were afresh. A second cup of wine again preceded the repast: after which the Master of the Feast took two unleavened cakes—broke one of them, placed what was broken on what remained entire, blessed, and distributed. It will be perceived that this is none other than a description of the act which our Blessed Lord himself is related to have performed in the verses which follow.

(h) Gen. xxxvii. 28.

(i) See more in the note on St. Matthew xxvi. 15.

(k) St. Matth. xxvi. 25—where see the note.

(l) See St. Luke xxii. 17, 18.

22 And as they did eat, JESUS took bread,

"Doubtless, in eager and adoring watchfulness, their eyes were fixed on all He did, and their ears open to all he said. He had already taught them to expect something precious at this supper, to partake of which with them He said he most earnestly desired; and they were now well accustomed to find that his actions were great miracles, and his words contained vast mysteries. Great therefore must have been their anxiety, and deep their attention, when with solemn and adorable action, 'Jesus took bread,'"^(m)

and blessed, and brake *it*, and gave to them, and said, Take eat: this is my Body.

"The whole action could not but have reminded them of those two great Miracles in which He had done the same;⁽ⁿ⁾ and of that awful comment on one of them afterwards at Capernaum, in which He said his own Body was the true bread alone to be desired.^(o) Every particular is recorded; and St. Paul also, who had himself received the account, not from Man, but by Revelation from God,^(p) on this one point alone comes in to add his testimony to that of the Evangelists. St. Luke, his Disciple, keeps closely to his statement; and when they come to the awful words themselves, then they all join in with one accord to give our Lord's exact expression,—'This is My Body:'"^(q) concerning which saying, see the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 26. St. Luke relates our Lord's words somewhat more fully: "This is My Body which is given," (St. Paul says "*broken*,")^(r) "for you; this do in remembrance of Me."^(s)

The Paschal Supper then proceeded: the guests partaking freely of "the Body of the Lamb," as they phrased it. The repast being ended, grace was said over a third solemn cup of wine, (the "Cup of Blessing" as it was called,) which was forthwith divided among the guests: and is not this the very ceremony which follows, and which grew in our SAVIOUR'S hands into the Sacrament of his most precious Blood? "After the same manner, also," says the great Apostle, "He took the Cup, when He had supped:"^(t) or, as St. Mark more briefly relates it,—

23 And He took the Cup, and when He had given thanks, He gave *it* to them:

"Saying, Drink ye all of it:"^(u)

and they all drank of it.

24 And He said unto them, This is my Blood of the New Testament, which is shed for many.

St. Luke says—"for you:"^(x) St. Matthew—"for many, for the Remission of Sins."^(y)

The Reader will find some remarks on what precedes, in the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 27, 28. St. Paul records, (which he derived by Revelation from CHRIST himself,) is somewhat fuller. He relates that our Lord said—"This Cup is the New Testament in My Blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of Me."^(z)

On all this, a living writer has remarked: "Here is the true Passover, more ancient than that of the Jews, for Melchizedek was before Aaron: and here is the true Melchizedek, (the Prince of Peace,) the Priest of the Most High God, blessing and bringing forth Bread and Wine for the true children of Abraham."^(a) Here is that Lion of the Tribe of Judah, out of whose dead body came forth sweetness.^(b) Here is the true Manna in the Wilderness, the Bread which came down from Heaven, the Word of God, of which whosoever eateth shall never die.^(c) Here is that Shew-bread set before the Lord, and 'taken from the children of Israel by an

(m) Williams.

(p) 1 Cor. xi. 23.

(s) St. Luke xxii. 19.

(x) St. Luke xxii. 20.

(u) Gen. xiv. 18, compared with Heb. v. 6. See. Is. ix. 6.

(c) Exodus xvi. 14, 15: also Ps. lxxviii. 24, 25. Compared with St. John vi. 31 to 35, and 49 to 58.

(n) St. Matthew xiv. 19: xv. 36.

(q) Williams.

(t) 1 Cor. xi. 25. Compare St. Luke xxii. 20.

(y) St. Matthew xxvi. 28.

(z) 1 Cor. xi. 25.

(o) St. John vi. 53 to 56.

(r) 1 Cor. xi. 24.

(u) St. Matt. xxvi. 27.

(b) Judges xiv. 8.

everlasting Covenant;’ of which none may partake but such as are pure in heart, and of the ‘Royal Priesthood.’(d) Here is that cake given to Elijah in the Wilderness, on the strength of which he went forty days and forty nights unto Horeb, the Mount of God.(e) These are those barley loaves which Elisha multiplied to support a hundred men.(f) Here is that cake of barley bread in the dream which Gideon heard of the Midianite, which fell on the camp of Midian, and destroyed the tent of the enemy.(g) Here is the fulfillment of that blessing which his Father gave to Israel, saying, ‘With Corn and Wine have I sustained him.’(h) Here is that peaceable Kingdom of the MESSIAH, of which the Prophet Zechariah spake when he said, ‘Corn shall make the young men cheerful, and New Wine the maids.’(i) Here is that which is written, ‘I will satisfy her poor with Bread.’(k) ‘the poor shall eat and be satisfied.’(l) Here is that ‘Bread’ which God bringeth out of the Earth, ‘which strengtheneth man’s heart,’ ‘and Wine that maketh glad the heart of man.’(m) Here is that which is written, ‘He gave them bread from Heaven to eat,’ and ‘man did eat Angels’ food.’(n) Here is fulfilled what was spoken of old, ‘Wisdom hath builded her House, She hath hewn out Her seven pillars, . . . She hath mingled Her wine, She hath also furnished Her table, . . . She crieth upon the highest places of the City, . . . Come, eat of My Bread, and drink of the Wine which I have mingled.’”(o)

Now, concerning these passages, and the like of these from the Old Testament Scriptures, some may inquire whether it is to be thought that Isaac and David, Solomon and Zechariah, actually spoke of the *LORD’S Supper* when they mentioned ‘Corn and Wine?’ and whether it is to be thought that Melchizedek and Gideon, Elijah and Elisha, and the rest, were concerned in transactions *certainly* typical of the same great Sacrament, at the several stages of their histories above alluded to?—It may be worth observing, in reply, that if the matter be thus overstated, what is certainly true may be made to appear not only false, but even ridiculous. It would not be safe, doubtless, to reply in the affirmative to either of the foregoing questions, *as they stand*. But without absolutely asserting so much, it is surely credible that events may have been so over-ruled by Providence, so shaped and fashioned by the Hands of ALMIGHTY GOD, on many more occasions even than is supposed, as to bear an intentional resemblance to events yet future, and therefore to become *typical* of them. Moreover, ‘holy men of God, *speaking as they were moved by the HOLY GHOST*,’”(p) were certainly often moved to employ language which, however little conscious the writers themselves may have been of its meaning,(q) was yet intended by the SPIRIT to have a prophetic reference to the latter days. While, therefore, it is admitted that in the silence of Holy Scripture, (which is our *only* infallible guide,) every individual instance must remain a matter of pious conjecture, yet it will be felt that the analogy of what *has* been revealed, and the concurrent opinions of the most ancient, most learned, and most holy men of every country and every age of the Church, constitutes an argument of exceeding dignity and weight of the general principle involved in such typical or prophetic interpretations of the Old Testament Scriptures. With these limitations, therefore, we are disposed to think that when Isaac spake to Israel concerning ‘Corn and Wine,’ his words *did* contain a far-reaching allusion to *that* Bread and *that* Wine which were to be hereafter provided by One greater than Isaac for ‘the Israel of God,’”(r)—even for the strengthening and refreshing of their souls . . . And the same thing may be said, with more or less of certainty, of the other places of Scripture quoted or alluded to in the earlier part of the present note.

And now to resume. Our LORD proceeds:—

25 Verily I say unto you, I will drink no more of the fruit of the vine, until that day that I drink it new in the Kingdom of God.

For an explanation of these words, see the note on St. Matthew xxvi. 29.—Judas then, was a partaker of this Supper: and this, among many other lessons, reminds us that no familiarity with ‘good men,—no splendor of opportunities for holiness;

(d) Levit. xxiv. 8, 9. See St. Matthew xii. 1, and 1 St. Peter ii. 9.

(e) 1 Kings xix. 8.

(f) 2 Kings iv. 42 to 44.

(g) Judges vii. 13.

(h) Gen. xxvii. 28 to 37.

(i) Zech. ix. 17.

(k) Ps. cxxxii. 15.

(l) Ps. xxii. 26.

(m) Ps. civ. 14, 15.

(n) Psalm lxxxviii. 25, and St. John vi. 31.

(o) Williams,—quoting Prov. ix. 1 to 5.

(p) 2 St. Peter i. 21.

(q) 1 St. Peter i. 11.

(r) See Gal. vi. 16. Compare Ps. lxxiii. 1.

neither the daily visit to the House of God, nor the daily walk where men are leading holy lives; nor sermons listened to, nor Sacraments received,—yea, though the Bread of Life and the Cup of Salvation were reached out to us by the very hands of CHRIST Himself,—are of any avail, in and by themselves. It was said prophetically by David, in the person of CHRIST,—“Mine old familiar friend, in whom I trusted, *which did eat of my bread*, hath lifted up his heel against me.”^(s) The vastness of our privileges does but increase the heinousness of our guilt.

We are reminded further, that three years, or less, are enough to witness an utter change of heart and purpose; even in one who, during all those years, shall enjoy the most prodigious advantages,—the most amazing opportunities,—the most open access to the means of Grace. For surely, when our SAVIOUR called Judas to His side, and made Him one of the Twelve Apostles,—singling that man out of the world to be near His person and to hear His discourses,—there was much of good and no small promise in him. But Sin had taken possession of his heart: so effectually taken possession of him, that he had become proof against every warning, every remonstrance. Any one who will take the trouble to reckon up the recorded warnings he received, will be astonished at their frequency: but if to these be added the hints of a less obvious nature, which were thrown out in his presence, (a few of which will be found referred to at the foot of the page.)^(t) it will seem as if the good Shepherd had been all along in pursuit of this one lost sheep.

Not least of all is it the aim of these remarks to suggest that the character of Judas is entitled to far more attention than it commonly receives at our hands. We are too apt, it may be, to set aside the warning which his crime presents, as if such revolting wickedness could not possibly concern us. But he who weighs the matter attentively will come to a very different result: and those in the Ministry must feel that the warning of the Traitor speaks even trumpet-tongued to *them*.

26 And when they had sung an hymn, they went out into the Mount of Olives.

27, 28 And JESUS saith unto them, All ye shall be offended because of Me this night: for it is written, I will smite the Shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered. But after that I am risen, I will go before you into Galilee.

29, 30, 31 But Peter said unto Him, Although all shall be offended, yet *will not* I. And JESUS saith unto him, Verily I say unto thee, That this day, *even* in this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. But he spake the more vehemently, If I should die with Thee, I will not deny Thee in any wise. Likewise also said they all.

Concerning all the preceding verses, the reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 30 to 35,—where almost the same words are repeated.

The blessed company have now crossed the brook Cedron, and reached the foot of the Mount of Olives,—“where was a Garden, into the which He entered, and His Disciples.”^(u)

32 And they came to a place which was named Gethsemane: and He saith to His Disciples, Sit ye here, while I shall pray.

Leaving eight of the Disciples near the entrance of the Garden, our SAVIOUR is found to withdraw with the three most favored of their number:—

33, 34 And He taketh with Him Peter and James and John, and began to be sore amazed, and to be very heavy; and saith unto them, My Soul is exceeding sorrowful unto death: tarry ye here, and watch.

These words in our translation, expressive of our LORD's Agony, “come far short

(s) Ps. xli. 9: quoted in St. John xiii. 18.

(t) St. Matthew vi. 19 to 24,—on which last verse, see the note: xix. 28 and 30,—where see the note; xxii. 11, where see the note. St. Mark x. 21 to 31,—on which last verse, see the note. St. Luke xiii. 15 to 34, &c.

(u) St. John xviii. 1.

of the original expression, which render Him suddenly possessed with fear, horror, and amazement, encompassed with grief, and overwhelmed with sorrow, pressed down with consternation of mind, tormented with anxiety of Spirit."(*x*) See more in the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 37 and 38.

35, 36 And He went forward a little, and fell on the ground, and prayed that, if it were possible, the hour might pass from Him. And He said, Abba, FATHER, all things *are* possible unto Thee; take away this Cup from Me: nevertheless not what I will, but what Thou wilt.

37, 38 And He cometh, and findeth them sleeping, and saith unto Peter, Simon, sleepest thou? couldst not thou watch one hour? Watch ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation. The spirit truly *is* ready, but the flesh *is* weak.

39, 40, 41, 42, 43 And again He went away, and prayed, and spake the same words. And when He returned, He found them asleep again, (for their eyes were heavy,) neither wist they what to answer Him. And He cometh the third time, and saith unto them, Sleep on now, and take *your* rest: it is enough, the hour is come; behold, the Son of Man is betrayed into the hand of sinners. Rise up, let us go; lo, he that betrayeth Me is at hand. And immediately, while He yet spake, cometh Judas, one of the Twelve, and with him a great multitude with swords and staves, from the chief Priests and the Scribes and the Elders.

The Evangelist St. Mark follows his predecessor in this part of the Gospel with singular closeness. For a few remarks on all the foregoing verses, it shall therefore suffice to refer the reader to the Commentary on St. Matthew xxvi. 40 to 47.

44 And he that betrayed Him had given them a token, saying, Whomsoever I shall kiss, that same is He; take Him, and lead Him away safely.

Judas may have added this from an apprehension that our Lord might escape, as he had often done before, from the very hands of His enemies.

45 And as soon as he was come, he goeth straightway to Him, and saith, Master, Master; and kissed Him.

"And JESUS said unto him, Friend, wherefore art thou come?"(*y*) On what precedes, see the notes on St. Matthew's Gospel,—xxvi. 48 to 50.

46, 47 And they laid their hands on Him, and took Him. And one of them that stood by drew a sword, and smote a servant of the high Priest, and cut off his ear.

"The servant's name was Malchus." Simon Peter drew the sword.(*z*) Concerning the miracle which followed, see the note on St. Luke xxii. 51.

48, 49, 50 And JESUS answered and said unto them, Are ye come out, as against a thief, with swords and *with* staves to take Me? I was daily with you in the Temple teaching, and ye took Me not; but the Scriptures must be fulfilled. And they all forsook Him, and fled.

Thus fulfilling the prophecy in verse 27.

51, 52 And there followed Him a certain young man, having a linen cloth cast about *his* naked *body*; and the young men laid hold on him: and he left the linen cloth, and fled from them naked.

(*x*) Bp. Pearson.

(*y*) St. Matthew xxvi. 50.

(*z*) St. John xviii. 10.

This is felt, at once, to be a very remarkable history; peculiar as it is to the present Gospel, and standing alone,—introduced by nothing, and, as it seems, leading to nothing. It is difficult to resist the suspicion that the “young man” in question was no other than the Evangelist St. Mark himself. He seems to have been aroused from rest by the commotion in the street,—to have descended, half-clad, in order to witness the disturbance,—and to have followed our Lord a little way into the city; when the incident here related occurred, and led to his hasty flight. . . . That the anecdote has been related for a wise purpose, no one can doubt: it may well, therefore, engage a portion of our attention, although conjecture be all we have to offer concerning it.

53, 54 And they led JESUS away to the High Priest: and with him were assembled all the chief priests and the elders and the Scribes. And Peter followed Him afar off, even into the Palace of the High Priest; and he sat with the servants, and warmed himself at the fire.

“For it was cold,”—observes the beloved Disciple.^(a) The nights in Palestine are in fact intensely cold during the Paschal season. St. Peter, having obtained admission within the high Priest’s palace by St. John’s means,^(b) takes his seat with the servants and others near the charcoal fire which burned in the lower part of the Hall, and which alone supplied the place with light. Our Lord meantime was at the upper end, surrounded by enemies. St. Peter’s history will be found continued below, in verse 66. The Evangelist proceeds with the history of our Lord’s Passion.

55, 56, 57, 58, 59 And the chief Priests and all the council sought for witness against JESUS to put Him to death; and found none. For many bare false witness against Him, but their witness agreed not together. And there arose certain, and bare false witness against Him, saying, We heard Him say, I will destroy this Temple that is made with hands, and within three days I will build another made without hands. But neither so did their witness agree together.

The reader is referred to the note on St. Matth. xxvi. 61. It will be observed that “blasphemous words against this Holy Place,” was the charge which the false witnesses brought against St. Stephen.^(c)

60, 61 And the high Priest stood up in the midst, and asked JESUS, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? what *is it which* these witness against Thee? But He held His peace, and answered nothing. Again the high Priest asked Him, and said unto Him, Art Thou the CHRIST, the Son of the Blessed?

62, 63, 64, 65 And JESUS said, I am: and ye shall see the Son of Man sitting on the Right Hand of Power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven. Then the high Priest rent his clothes, and saith, What need we any further witnesses? Ye have heard the blasphemy: what think ye? And they all condemned Him to be guilty of death. And some began to spit on Him, and to cover His face, and to buffet Him, and to say unto Him, Prophecy: and the servants did strike Him with the palms of their hands.

Those wretched miscreants who spat upon the face of Him who is described as “the Brightness of [the FATHER’S] Glory, and the express image of His person,”^(d) had been beheld long before by the keen eye of prophecy. They occupy a distinct place in Isaiah’s solemn picture of the humiliation of the Son of Man: “He hid not His face from the shame and the *spitting*.”

(a) St John xviii. 18.

(c) Acts vi. 13.

(b) See St. John xviii. 15, 16.

(d) Heb. i. 3.

Concerning what precedes, the reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 63 to 68.

66, 67 And as Peter was beneath in the Palace, there cometh one of the maids of the high Priest: and when she saw Peter warming himself, she looked upon him, and said, And thou also wast with JESUS of Nazareth.

She knew St. Peter "when she saw him *warming himself*,"—because the blaze of light then made his features visible.

68 But he denied, saying, I know not, neither understand I what thou sayest. And he went out into the porch; and the cock crew.

It will be observed that though Simon Peter changed his place, (withdrawing from the light of the fire to the darkness of the porch,) he did not escape a second and a third fall. "It is in vain to avoid external occasions of temptation, while the liability to fall arises from within: and whenever we are ready to deny Christ, the occasion for doing so will seldom be wanting." (c) It follows,—

69 And a maid saw him again, and began to say to them that stood by. This is *one* of them. And he denied it again.

No wonder she knew him: for she had just before let him in, and had seen him with St. John, who was known to her as our Lord's Disciple. (f)

70 And a little after, they that stood by said again to Peter, Surely thou art *one* of them: for thou art a Galilæan, and thy speech agreeth *thereto*.

The dialect of Galilee, to which country all the Apostles seem to have belonged, (g) was unpolished and corrupt; arising probably out of the intercourse and admixture of its inhabitants with the neighbouring Heathen, whence their country was even called "*Galilee of the Gentiles*." (h) This circumstance rendered the Apostles at once distinguishable from the natives of Judæa.

71, 72 But he began to curse and swear, *saying*, I know not this Man of whom ye speak. And the second time the cock crew. And Peter called to mind the word that JESUS said unto him, Before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice. And when he thought thereon, he wept.

The reader will find these verses commented upon in the notes on St. Matthew xxvi. 74, 75.

St. Peter's conduct on this occasion seems to us very wonderful; and doubtless it *is* a surprising thing that one so loving and stout-hearted should have proved thus faithless in the hour of trial. But we read his history to little purpose, if we flatter ourselves that *we* could never have acted thus, and the like. Rather, let us be well persuaded that we behold our own image, as in a mirror, in all such pages of the Gospel as the present. His conduct is an exact picture of the resolutions which men make when alone with God, at their prayers, as contrasted with their conduct a few hours afterwards, when assailed by Temptation. And in fact, when we read the history of St. Peter's fall, can we be so unjust to the great Apostle as not to perceive that it must have been indeed a tremendous night, and *his* a terrible trial, or he could never thus have fallen? We must remember the vanished hope, when he beheld his adorable Master the sport of cruel men,—buffeted, insulted, condemned: we must picture the darkness within, as well as without him; dreaded assaults, not only of "flesh and blood," but of those spiritual foes also, whose malice must assuredly have made itself felt during this, "the hour of darkness." Lastly, there was the desertion of nine of the Apostles,—and the treachery of one: so that Simon Peter must have felt himself alone among enemies,—liable, at any moment,

(c) Williams.

(g) Acts i. 11: ii. 7.

(f) St. John xviii. 15 to 17.

(h) Is. ix. 1, quoted in St. Matth. iv. 15.

to be called upon to share the fiery trial which was but too clearly destined for his LORD.—He who shall attentively consider all this, instead of indulging in surprise at the Apostle's weakness, will probably rather feel disposed to make much of the Apostle's warning,—“Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.”⁽ⁱ⁾ “Considering thyself,” as it is elsewhere said, “lest thou also be tempted.”^(k)

CHAPTER XV.

1 JESUS brought bound, and accused before Pilate. 15 Upon the clamor of the common people, the murderer Barabbas is loosed, and JESUS delivered up to be crucified. 17 He is crowned with thorns, 19 spit on, and mocked. 21 Fainteth in bearing His Cross. 27 Hangeth between two thieves. 29 Suffereth the triumphing reproaches of the Jews. 39 But confessed by the centurion to be the Son of God. 43 And is honourably buried by Joseph.

1 AND straightway in the morning the chief Priests held a consultation with the Elders and Scribes and the whole Council, and bound JESUS, and carried *Him* away, and delivered *Him* to Pilate.

It was now the morning of Friday. The Evangelists are unusually full and particular in their narrative of the Passion of our blessed LORD; so that, by a careful comparison of the Gospels, the progress of the history from hour to hour may be discovered. What was done at the Council for example, is discoverable from St. Luke:^(a) while St. Matthew proceeds in this place to describe the fruitless repentance of Judas.^(b) For some remarks on this verse, the reader is referred to the notes on St. Matthew xxvii. 1, 2.

2, 3, 4, 5 And Pilate asked Him, Art Thou the King of the Jews? And He answering said unto him, Thou sayest *it*. And the chief Priests accused Him of many things: but He answered nothing. And Pilate asked Him again, saying, Answerest Thou nothing? behold how many things they witness against Thee. But JESUS yet answered nothing; so that Pilate marvelled.

Concerning the preceding verses, enough will be found in the notes on St. Matthew's Gospel:^(c) while the sacred narrative itself may be completed by a reference to St. John,—xviii. 29 to 38.

One of the “many things” whereof the chief Priests accused our Blessed LORD, was, that He stirred up the people, “teaching throughout all Jewry, beginning from Galilee to this place. When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked whether the Man were a Galilæan? And as soon as he knew that He belonged unto Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who himself also was at Jerusalem at that time.”^(d) St. Luke, whose words these are, proceeds to describe a fresh scene of our LORD's Passion. Herod, in the end, sent his Prisoner back to Pilate. It follows,

(i) St. Matth. xxvi. 41.

(a) See St. Luke xxii. 66 to 71.

(c) See St. Matth. xxvii. 11 to 14.

(k) Gal. vi. 1.

(b) St. Matth. xxvii. 3 to 10,—where see the notes.

(d) St. Luke xxiii. 5 to 7.

6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15 Now at *that* feast he released unto them one prisoner, whomsoever they desired. And there was *one* named Barabbas, *which lay* bound with them that had made insurrection with him, who had committed murder in the insurrection. And the multitude crying aloud began to desire *him to do* as he had ever done unto them. But Pilate answered them saying, Will ye that I release unto you the King of the Jews? (For he knew that the chief Priests had delivered Him for envy.) But the chief Priests moved the people, that he should rather release Barabbas unto them. And Pilate answered and said again unto them, What will ye then that I shall do *unto Him* whom ye call the King of the Jews? And they cried out again, Crucify Him. Then Pilate said unto them, Why, what evil hath He done? And they cried out the more exceedingly, Crucify Him. And *so* Pilate, willing to content the people, released Barabbas unto them: and delivered JESUS, when he had scourged Him, to be crucified.

"They accused Pilate at Rome for all the violences and rapines which he had committed, and by this act he thought to pacify them."(e)

16, 17, 18, 19, 20 And the soldiers led Him away unto the hall, called Prætorium; and they call together the whole band. And they clothed Him with purple, and platted a crown of thorns, and put it about His *head*, and began to salute Him, Hail, King of the Jews! And they smote Him on the head with a reed, and did spit upon Him, and bowing *their* knees worshipped Him. And when they had mocked Him, they took off the purple from Him, and put His own clothes on Him, and led Him out to crucify Him.

The ancients found heavenly teaching in every line of Holy Writ. Thus Origen remarks concerning the verse before us,—“of the cloak, it is mentioned that they took it off Him; but of the crown of thorns, the Evangelists have not spoken: so that there are now no longer those ancient thorns of ours, since JESUS has taken them from us upon His reverend Head.” The allusion is to that undoing of the ancient curse(f) which seems intended by our Lord’s wearing a crown of thorns; and to which the ancient Fathers delight in alluding.

Throughout all the preceding verses, the Evangelist St. Mark treads with wonderful exactness in the footsteps of St. Matthew. It shall suffice therefore to refer the Reader to the notes on the earlier Gospel,(g)—calling his attention to two interesting particulars which St. Matthew has here supplied, but which St. Mark omits: namely, the warning which Pilate received from his wife, “when he was set down on the judgment seat,”—and the senseless ceremony which the same Roman Governor performed, before giving up the Holy One to be crucified. “He took water, and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person. See ye to it.”(h)

But the SAVIOUR of the World is already on His way to Crucifixion:

21 And they compel one Simon a Cyrenian, who passed by, coming out of the country, the father of Alexander and Rufus, to bear His cross.

“Simon obtained not this office by chance, but was brought to the spot by God’s Providence, that he might be found worthy of mention in the Gospel, and worthy of the Ministry of the Cross of CHRIST. It was meet not only that the SAVIOUR should carry His Cross, but also that *we* should take part therein, being employed in a service so beneficial to us. Yet would it not have profited us so much to take it upon us, as it has profited us that He should take it upon Himself.”(i)

(e) Bp. Pearson.

(f) Gen. iii. 18. See the note on St. Matth. xxvii. 29.

(g) See the notes on St. Matth. xxvii. 15 to 31.

(h) St. Matth. xxvii. 19 and 21, 25.

(i) Origen.

St. Mark alone, it is, who mentions "Alexander and Rufus,"—(two well-known Disciples, it may be supposed,)—as the sons of the man who had the blessed privilege of bearing the Cross of CHRIST. Perhaps this was the same Rufus to whom St. Paul sends a loving message, in the last chapter of his Epistle to the Romans; (k) adding a salutation to "his Mother and mine." Was she then the wife of Simon the Cyrenian?—See more in the note on St. Matthew xxvii. 32.

It is reasonable to think that St. Mark published his Gospel at Rome. He will therefore have probably mentioned the names of Alexander and Rufus because those two living witnesses were able to attest the truth of what he wrote.

From the City-gate to the scene of Crucifixion Simon bore our SAVIOUR'S CROSS. It follows,—

22, 23 And they bring him unto the place Golgotha, which is, being interpreted, The place of a skull. And they gave Him to drink wine mingled with myrrh: but He received it not.

This was a stupefying draught,—the merciful intention of which was to make the sufferer unconscious of the coming torture. But CHRIST must drain the cup of suffering to the very dregs; and therefore will not partake of the opiate which some loving hand now offers to His lips.

24, 25 And when they had crucified Him, they parted His garments, casting lots upon them, what every man should take. And it was the third hour, and they crucified Him.

The Reader is requested here to read the notes on St. Matthew xxvii. 33 to 35.—It was therefore at six o'clock in the morning that Pilate passed sentence on our LORD: (l) and at nine, that "they crucified Him." At twelve the mysterious darkness began: at three, He expired on the Cross: (m) at six in the evening, they buried Him: (n) Thus have the hours of the day become consecrated by the Cross and Passion of our SAVIOUR CHRIST! To Christian hearts the hours of the day no less than the days of the week are full of Him!

26 And the superscription of His accusation was written over, THE KING OF THE JEWS.

27, 28 And with Him they crucify two thieves; the one on His right Hand, and the other on His left. And the Scripture was fulfilled, which saith, And He was numbered with the transgressors.

Alluding to a well-known place in the fifty-third of Isaiah,—to which our SAVIOUR had already directed the attention of His Disciples, when, at the end of the Paschal Supper, He foretold that "this that is written must yet be accomplished in Me, 'And He was reckoned among the transgressors.'" (o)—Concerning what precedes, see the notes on St. Matthew xxvii. 37 and 38.

One of the ancients remarks finely that in the two thieves who were crucified with Him, "one on the right Hand, and the other on the left," "was represented that separation of all mankind which shall be made in the Judgment:" (p) and "because there shall be a division of believers to the right, and unbelievers to the left, one of the two is saved by justification of Faith." (q)

29, 30, 31 And they that passed by railed on Him, wagging their heads, and saying, Ah, Thou that destroyest the Temple, and buildest it in three days, save Thyself, and come down from the cross. Likewise also the chief Priests mocking said among themselves with the Scribes, He saved others; Himself He cannot save.

"So desperately wicked is the human heart, that it came to this,—that while they exulted in triumphant malice over Him whom they now had so thoroughly in their power, as they thought, they reproached Him with the very works of mercy He had

(k) Rom. xvi. 13.

(m) St. Matth. xxvii. 45 to 50.

(o) St. Luke xxii. 37, quoting Is. liii. 12.

(l) See St. John xix. 14 to 16.

(n) St. Luke xxiii. 53, 54.

(p) Leo.

(q) Hilary.

done, even with the dead man whom He had called from the grave; for *that* is the act which they seem to allude to. But as they fulfilled every other title, so did they also mark Him out now as *the SAVIOUR*, and bear witness to Him as the true JESUS. All the three Evangelists have recorded those words 'He *saved* others.'”(r) —See the note on St. Matthew xxvii. 39, 40.

32 Let CHRIST the King of Israel descend now from the Cross, that we may see and believe.

Did they then choose this sign in their blindness, and suppose that such a display of Divine Power would have wrought in them conviction? If so, little indeed did they know themselves,—who, when CHRIST *rose from Death*, refused to believe. . . . Or did not this challenge rather proceed from the Enemy of Man's Salvation,—the old Serpent himself; who felt that the Seed of the Woman was already bruising his head,—that the Cross had become the instrument of His power,—and that the strength of Hell was being overcome by *His* sufferings?

“If Thou be the Son of God,” (as it is said in St. Matthew's Gospel,) “come down from the Cross.”(s) “But He, on the contrary, does *not* come down from the Cross, *because* He is the Son of God.”(t)

And they that were crucified with Him reviled Him.

33, 34 And when the sixth hour was come, there was darkness over the whole land until the ninth hour. And at the ninth hour JESUS cried with a loud voice, saying, ELOI, ELOI, lama sabachthani? which is, being interpreted, My GOD, My GOD, why hast Thou forsaken Me?

Consider how the mysterious complaint which these words embody, is the very burden of the twenty-second Psalm,—from which the words are quoted. See verses 9 and 11 of that Psalm. It is, indeed, a complaint of perpetual recurrence in the Book of Psalms,—as if this most terrible calamity of all, and perhaps the most mysterious of the sufferings of the Son of Man, had been constantly presented to the mind of the inspired Psalmist.(u) But concerning the three preceding verses, see the notes on St. Matthew xxvii. 42 to 46.

35, 36 And some of them that stood by, when they heard *it*, said, Behold, He calleth Elias. And one ran and filled a sponge full of vinegar, and put *it* on a reed, and gave Him to drink, saying, Let alone; let us see whether Elias will come to take Him down.

37 And JESUS cried with a loud Voice, and gave up the Ghost.

38 And the Veil of the Temple was rent in twain from the top to the bottom.

This is the only one of the portents following our REDEEMER's Death, which all the three Evangelists agree in recording.(x) This may be because the veil of the Temple was typical of His flesh, (as the spirit Himself assures us,)(y)—which was now cruelly rent and torn on the Cross.

39 And when the centurion, which stood over against Him, saw that He so cried out, and gave up the Ghost, he said, Truly this Man was the SON of GOD.

Take notice that miracles cluster round the Cross of CHRIST,—not only before, but also after Death. We have already read of the miraculous darkness: the “*loud Voice*,” with which at the instant of dissolution, (“the ninth hour,”) our SAVIOUR repeatedly cried out, was miraculous also. Both St. Matthew and St. Mark notice that those mysterious words of agony, “My God, My God, why hast Thou forsaken Me?” were uttered “with a *loud voice*.”(z) and all the three Evangelists record that when He committed His Spirit into the Hands of His FATHER, He “cried

(r) Williams.

(s) St. Matth. xxvii. 40.

(t) Chrysostom.

(u) See Ps. x. 1: xxvii. 9: xxxv. 22: xxxviii. 21: lxxi. 12.

(x) See St. Matth. xxvii. 51: St. Luke xxiii. 45.

(y) Hebr. x. 20.

(z) St. Matth. xxvii. 46, and St. Mark xv. 34.

again with a *loud* voice,"(a)—not like an ordinary person at the point of death; but like One who "had power to lay down His life, and to take it again!"(b) Accordingly St. Mark, in the verse before us, notes particularly that it was when the Centurion "*saw that He so cried out, and gave up the Ghost,*" he confessed that this could be no other than the Son of God!—"The miracle," says Bishop Pearson, "was not in the death, but in the voice: the strangeness was not that He should die, but that at the point of death He should cry out so loud. He died not by, but with, a miracle."

How much more truly of Him than of Elisha,(c) (His type,) might it be said, "after His Death His Body prophesied:"(d) for what more striking miracle was ever shown forth in His adorable person, than that which attended the piercing of His side?(e) Not only was the Veil rent,—not only was there an Earthquake and a rending of the rocks,—but the graves also were opened, "and many bodies of the Saints which slept arose, and came out of the graves after His Resurrection."(f) Verily, "He did wonders in His Life, and at His Death were His works marvellous:" but "for all this, the people repented not: neither departed they from their sins."(g)

"Thus was the work of Redemption finished; and the REDEEMER'S Body hung lifeless upon the Cross. CHRIST had been 'crucified,' and was 'dead.' If His enemies had denied or doubted of it, the very stones would cry out and confirm it. Why did the Sun put on mourning, why were the graves opened, but for a funeral? Why did the Earth quake? why were the rocks rent? why did the frame of Nature shake, but because the God of Nature died?"—So far Bishop Pearson,—alluding to those other portentous signs which St. Matthew has alone recorded. The reader is referred to the remarks which have been already offered on the earlier Gospel,—chapter xxvii. 47 to 54.

40, 41 There were also women looking on afar off: among whom was Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James the less and of Joses, and Salome; (who also, when He was in Galilee, followed Him;) and ministered unto Him, and many other women which came up with Him unto Jerusalem.

42 And now, when the even was come, because it was the Preparation, that is, the day before the Sabbath,

On which day no manner of work might be done: because, therefore, it wanted only a short time to sunset, when the Sabbath would begin, no time was to be lost. Accordingly,

43 Joseph of Arimathæa, an honourable counsellor, which also waited for the Kingdom of God, came, and went in boldly unto Pilate, and craved the Body of JESUS.

The Evangelist notices the *boldness* of Joseph of Arimathæa, on this occasion, because, although a Disciple of our Lord, he had hitherto been so "secretly, for fear of the Jews,"—as St. John informs us.(h) To "wait for the Kingdom of God," or "for the Consolation of Israel,"(i) denotes the faithful looking forward to the promised Coming of MESSIAH. "It was divinely provided that this man should have been *rich*,"(k) remarks Bede, "in order that he might have access to Pilate; for no mean man could have obtained access to the Governor: and also that he should have been *just*, in order to receive the Body of the Lord."

Nicodemus joined him in the holy office of providing for our SAVIOUR'S Burial: whereby "they confessed CHRIST, when to all worldly appearance He could not profit them; and when all human prudence would have condemned their interference. Their action is like most of the best actions of the Saints of God in Scripture, in that it was opposed to worldly wisdom and prudential policy."(l)

"The design of the Jews," says Bp. Pearson, "made His grave with the wick-

(a) St. Matthew xxvii. 50: St. Mark xv. 37: St. Luke xxiii. 46.

(b) St. John x. 18.

(c) See St. John xix. 34.

(d) Ecclesiasticus xlviii. 14, 15.

(e) St. Luke ii. 23, where see the note.

(f) St. Matth. xxvii. 51 to 53, where see the notes.

(g) St. John xix. 38.

(h) St. Matth. xxvii. 57.

(i) Williams.

(j) Ecclesiasticus xlviii. 13.

(k) St. Matth. xxvii. 51 to 53, where see the notes.

(l) Williams.

ed:’(m) but ‘because He had done no violence, neither was any deceit in His mouth;’ because He was no ways guilty of those crimes for which they justly suffered; that there might be a difference after their death, though there appeared little distinction in it; the counsel of His FATHER, the design of Heaven, put Him ‘with the rich in His Death,’ and caused a Counsellor and a Ruler of the Jews to bury Him.”—*That* Counsellor, (by which is meant a member of the high court of Sanhedrin,) had craved of Pilate the Body of JESUS:

44 And Pilate marvelled if He were already dead:

Rather, “*that He was.*” The Roman Governor was surprised to find that life was so soon extinct: for crucifixion was a very lingering death. He considered not the amazing sufferings through which the SAVIOUR of the World had gone ever since the previous evening; and which had so enfeebled His sacred limbs and human frame, that at the end of six hours of anguish on the bitter Cross, His Soul had become severed from His Body. This circumstance, however, of His speedy death, “can hardly be regarded otherwise than as miraculous.”(n)

45, 46 and calling unto him the centurion, he asked him whether He had been any while dead. And when he knew it of the centurion, he gave the Body to Joseph. And he bought fine linen, and took Him down, and wrapped Him in the linen, and laid Him in a sepulchre which was hewn out of a rock, and rolled a stone unto the door of the sepulchre.

“Not in vain,” remarks Origen, “is it said that the Body was wrapped in clean linen, and laid in a new tomb, and a great stone rolled to the mouth: but to show that everything touching the Body of JESUS must be clean, and new, and very great.”

Thus He, who, in life, “had not where to lay His head,”(o) in death also was indebted to a stranger for the resting place of His body. “And what could *He* have to do with a sepulchre, to whom Death could not properly belong? What had *He* to do with a tomb on Earth, whose seat was in Heaven? and who was only in the grave for three days; not so much like one lying in death, as like one resting upon a bed?”(p)

47 And Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of Joses beheld where He was laid.

“Sitting over against the sepulchre,”—as St. Matthew declares.(q) “There sat they in the most blessed of all employments,—namely, in meditation on CHRIST’S Death.” “While the rest,” says Jerome, “left the LORD, the women continued in their offices, as expecting what JESUS had promised. And on this account they deserved to be the first to see the Resurrection; for ‘he that endureth unto the end, the same shall be saved.’”

(m) Is. liiii. 9.

(o) St. Matthew viii. 20.

(n) Bp. Lonsdale and Archd. Hale.

(p) Augustine.

(q) St. Matth. xxvii. 61.

CHAPTER XVI.

1 *An Angel declareth the Resurrection of CHRIST to three women.* 9 *CHRIST Himself appeareth to Mary Magdalene:* 12 *To two going into the country:* 14 *Then to the Apostles,* 15 *whom He sendeth forth to preach the Gospel.* 19 *And ascendeth into Heaven.*

"As CHRIST died for us and was buried, so is it to be believed that He went down into Hell."(*a*) This momentous doctrine, forming as it does a distinct clause in the Apostles' Creed, has been judged by our Church worthy of being contained in a separate Article. The event alluded to obtains no historical notice indeed in the Gospel; but it belongs to the present place, the interval of time, namely, between the burial of our LORD'S Body, and His rising to life again on the third day.

Our LORD'S Soul did not, of course, descend into that dismal region where the fallen angels are "reserved into everlasting chains under darkness until the judgment of the great Day:"(*b*) but only into that invisible place which is the appointed habitation of departed souls until the general Resurrection: and to that part of it where "the souls of the faithful, after they are delivered from the burthen of the flesh, are in joy and felicity."(*c*) This great Truth may be gathered with certainty from several places of Scripture, which it shall suffice to indicate at the foot of the page:(*d*) from the two last it will be discovered that the HOLY SPIRIT has seen fit further to reveal the purpose with which our SAVIOUR'S Soul went among the souls of men "in safe keeping." "That He should go to that place was a necessary branch of the general scheme and project of Redemption, which required that the Divine WORD should take our nature upon Him, and fulfill the entire condition of Humanity in every period and stage of man's existence,—from the commencement of life, to the extinction and renewal of it."(*e*)

But the course of the Evangelical narrative now invites our attention to the history of the morning of the first Easter Day:

1 AND when the Sabbath was past, Mary Magdalene, and Mary the mother of James, and Salome, had bought sweet spices, that they might come and anoint Him.

But Mary, the sister of Lazarus, had come beforehand, (as our LORD Himself declared,) "to anoint His Body to the burying."(*f*) Take notice that she who is here called "Mary the Mother of James," and in the last verse of the former chapter "Mary the Mother of Joses,"(*g*) was lately styled "*Mary the Mother of James the less and of Joses.*"(*h*)

2 And very early in the morning the first day of the week, they came unto the sepulchre at the rising of the sun.

Concerning these two verses of Scripture, see what has been already offered on St. Matthew xxviii. 1.—As these holy women approached the Sepulchre, "when it

(*a*) Article III.

(*b*) St. Jude, verse 6.

(*c*) Burial Service.

(*d*) Ps. xvi. 10, quoted and explained by St. Peter, in Acts ii. 25 to 31:—Ephes. iv. 9:—1 St. Peter iii. 18 to 20: iv. 6.

(*e*) Bp. Horsley.

(*f*) St. Mark xiv. 8.

(*g*) St. Mark xv. 47.

(*h*) St. Mark xv. 40.

was yet dark,"(i) they were full of anxiety as to how they should proceed when they reached the place of their LORD's rest:

3 And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?

"For it was very great," as St. Mark immediately adds: first observing,—

4, 5 And when they looked, they saw that the stone was rolled away: for it was very great. And entering into the sepulchre, they saw a young man sitting on the right side, clothed in a long white garment: and they were affrighted.

The supernatural means by which the rolling away of the stone had been effected, St. Matthew describes at large,—chap. xxviii. 2 to 4; to the notes on which place the reader is referred. Take notice that the Angel (the "young man,") was seen "sitting on the right side" of the sepulchral chamber into which the women had entered,—concerning which position, see the note on St. Luke i. 11.

6 And he saith unto them, Be not affrighted: ye seek JESUS of Nazareth, which was crucified: He is risen: He is not here: behold the place where they laid Him.

Some remarks on this will be found in the notes on St. Matthew xxvii. 5 and 6.

7 But go your way, tell His Disciples and Peter that He goeth before you into Galilee: there shall ye see Him, as He said unto you.

"His Disciples,—and Peter:—"how much of Love and Mercy was there in this mention of the Apostle who had thrice denied his LORD! and who may well be thought, at this very time, to have been swallowed up with sorrow,—to have felt that he was "not meet to be called an Apostle." Take notice that for his further comfort and assurance, to him was vouchsafed a special appearance of his risen LORD.(k)

St. Mark records the Angel's announcement of the appearance in Galilee; but concerning the appearance itself, he is silent. Enough has been already offered on this subject in the Commentary on St. Matthew's Gospel.(l)

8 And they went out quickly, and fled from the sepulchre; for they trembled and were amazed: neither said they any thing to any man, for they were afraid.

But "did run to bring His Disciples word,"—as St. Matthew relates.(m) The same Evangelist also records the wonderful incident which befell them by the way.(n)

9 Now when JESUS was risen early the first day of the week, He appeared first to Mary Magdalene, out of whom He had cast seven devils.

This then was the first of the ten recorded appearances of our SAVIOUR after His Resurrection,—five of which belong to the first Easter-Day. The circumstances under which our LORD revealed Himself to Mary Magdalene are given at length by St. John, in his Gospel.(o)

10, 11 And she went and told them that had been with Him, as they mourned and wept. And they, when they had heard that He was alive, and had been seen of her, believed not.

12, 13 After that, He appeared in another form unto two of them,

(i) St. John xx. 1.

(l) See the notes on St. Matth. xxviii. 7 and 16.

(n) St. Matthew xxviii. 9. 10.

(k) St. Luke xxiv. 34. 1 Cor. xv. 5.

(m) St. Matthew xxviii. 8.

(o) St. John xx. 11 to 17.

as they walked, and went into the country. And they went and told *it* unto the residue: neither believed they them.

This is the appearance to Cleopas and his companion, at Emmaus; which that very companion, (for St. Luke himself is thought to have been he,) delivers at length in the last chapter of his Gospel.^(p) Take notice, however, that St. Mark records the reception which the story of the two Disciples met with,—a circumstance which St. Luke has withheld, and concerning which the reader is referred below, to the note on ver. 14.

A wonderful change seems to have passed over the appearance of our LORD, at His Resurrection. He was the same, indeed, yet another; and thus, was mistaken by Mary, in the garden, for the gardener,^(q)—and was recognized neither by Cleopas and his companion,^(r) nor by the seven Disciples in the ship.^(s) St. Mark seems to express the same thing in this place when he says that CHRIST “appeared in another form.”

14 Afterward, He appeared unto the eleven as they sat at meat, and upbraided them with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them which had seen Him after He was risen.

That is, their risen LORD rebuked the Eleven Apostles for disbelieving the evidence of Mary Magdalene,^(t)—of the rest of the company of women,^(u)—of Cleopas and his companion.^(x) This is much to be noted; for we are prone to speak of “the incredulity of St. Thomas,” as if *he alone* had shown symptoms of infirmity in this respect. True indeed it is that he, by resisting their combined evidence, became specially obnoxious to rebuke: yet it is evident that in *his* failing, the whole body of the Apostles had largely participated.

Nor may we speak of their conduct in this respect without reverent wonder,—without surprise, tempered by a salutary sympathy for the strangeness and difficulty of their position.

Lastly, let it be observed that neither by His rebuke to St. Thomas, nor to the Eleven Apostles, does our LORD reprove inquiry into the grounds of the Faith. He does not condemn the examination of evidence: but the withholding of belief in the presence of *sufficient* evidence. He upbraided the Eleven “with their unbelief and hardness of heart, because they believed not them *which had seen Him* after He was risen.”

It will perhaps be regarded as a very improbable suggestion that the words which follow were uttered long after the occasion spoken of in the preceding verse: but the fact may be regarded as certain.

15 And He said unto them, Go ye into all the World, and preach the Gospel to every creature.

The largeness of the Commission thus given, is emphatic. “Go ye therefore, and make Disciples of *all nations*,” it is said in St. Matthew’s Gospel.^(y) “Repentance and remission of sins” was to be preached “among *all nations*, beginning at Jerusalem.”^(z) “Ye shall be witness unto Me,” said our LORD, “both in Jerusalem, and in all Judæa, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the Earth.”^(a) These injunctions stand in remarkable contrast with the Commission which the Twelve received from their LORD during the days of His earthly Ministry.^(b)

The Apostles then, were to preach the Gospel to every creature; “baptizing them,” as it is said in St. Matthew’s Gospel,^(c) “in the Name of the FATHER, and of the SON, and of the HOLY GHOST.”

16 He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved;

Take notice that *Baptism* as well as *Faith* is here required by our LORD: the former cannot be neglected therefore, without imminent peril.

(p) St. Luke xxiv. 13 to 35.

(q) St. John xx. 15.

(r) St. Luke xxiv. 16.

(s) St. John xxi. 4: and see ver. 12.

(t) See above, verses 10 and 11.

(u) See St. Luke xxiv. 11.

(x) See above, ver. 13.

(y) St. Matth. xxviii. 19.

(z) St. Luke xxiv. 47.

(a) Acts i. 8.

(b) See St. Matth. x. 5, 6.

(c) St. Matth. xxviii. 19,—where see the notes.

"This saying seems, in the first place, to point out who are the fit subjects for Holy Baptism . . . '*He that believeth*'—may be baptized. 'If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest,' (*d*) were the express words of the Deacon Philip to the Ethiopian eunuch. '*He that believeth*;' but *in what*? No doubt . . . in the FATHER, and in the SON, and in the HOLY GHOST. So in effect, and almost in words, the eunuch confessed: so Timothy doubtless professed his good profession before many witnesses; (*e*) and so Christians have made profession at the holy font of Baptism in every age of Christian History." (*f*)

"He that believeth and is baptized, shall be saved." That is, he shall forthwith be delivered from Death,—shall be introduced into the Ark of CHRIST'S Church,—and be put into a state of Salvation: shall be made "a member of CHRIST, a child of God, and an inheritor of the Kingdom of Heaven." Finally, "if he hold fast his belief, and mature his virtue; if he persevere in prayer, and by the grace of God grow to the full stature of a perfect man in CHRIST,—he shall be saved" in the great and terrible Day. (*g*)

But he that believeth not shall be damned.

"He that rejects the Gospel when offered to him, as it will be, with full evidence of its truth, shall have no part in its saving mercy; but shall be left to the condemnation due to him from God's justice for his sins. There are many passages in the New Testament which speak strongly and fearfully of the sinfulness and punishment of unbelief. (*h*)—Our LORD does not say anything of Baptism in the latter clause of this sentence, because refusal to believe would carry with it refusal to be baptized, as a necessary consequence." (*i*)

17, 18 And these signs shall follow them that believe; in My Name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; they shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.

In strict conformity with our LORD'S promise, all these wonderful gifts are found in actual operation in the first ages of the Church. Thus, unclean spirits were expelled by Philip the Deacon; (*k*) the Gentile friends of Cornelius, (*l*) and the twelve Disciples at Ephesus, (*m*) are found to have "spoken with tongues:" the Seventy had "power given them to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy;" (*n*) "gifts of healing" are mentioned both by St. Paul (*o*) and by St. James, (*p*) as remaining in the Church. Thus, instances are even recorded of all these privileges of the first believers,—except that which regards the "drinking of any deadly thing." It was to be expected that these miraculous gifts would die out of the Church, (or rather, that God would withhold from men the power of exercising the gifts which He is no where said to have revoked,) when *the need* of them had ceased; namely, when the Faith had become widely extended, and firmly established.

But has the Church *entirely* lost her precious birth-right, and do *no* such signs as those here spoken of "follow them that believe?" Let us, on the contrary, be well persuaded that the mighty works under discussion are daily enacted by the faithful,—surely although invisibly; and indeed, after a very lofty fashion also. Evil inclinations overcome, and wicked imaginations effectually repressed: a divine theme, (the language of Heaven,) constantly engaging "the best member that we have;" intercourse with sinners, and familiarity with a sinful world,—yet no harm incurred: with the eye, polluting sights encountered,—by the ear, noxious discourse drunk in,—yet, (by God's mercy,) without defilement: ministrations to sick souls, and their consequent recovery:—what are all these glorious privileges of Christian men, but daily fulfillments of the Divine promise concerning what "signs" should "follow them that believe?"

(*d*) Acts viii. 37.

(*e*) Moberly.

(*h*) See St. Luke xii. 46. St. John iii. 18, 36: v. 38, 44, 46, 47: xii. 48. Heb. iii. 12. 1 St. John v. 10. Rev. xxi. 8.

(*i*) Bp. Lonsdale and Archd. Hale.

(*l*) Acts x. 46.

(*n*) St. Luke x. 19. Compare Acts xxviii. 5.

(*p*) St. James v. 14, 15.

(*e*) 1 Tim. vi. 12.

(*g*) Moberly.

(*k*) Acts viii. 7.

(*m*) Acts xix. 6.

(*o*) 1 Cor. xii. 9.

19 So then after the LORD had spoken unto them, He was received up into Heaven, and sat on the Right Hand of GOD.

That is, after our LORD on different occasions, for forty days, had spoken to His Apostles "of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of GOD,"^(g) "He was received up into Heaven." The scene of the Ascension was the Mount of Olives, situated in the district called Bethany;^(r) whither having conducted His Disciples, the SAVIOUR of the World "lifted up His Hands and blessed them. And it came to pass, while He blessed them, He was parted from them, and carried up into Heaven:"^(s) they, all the while, beholding Him; "and a cloud received Him out of their sight."^(t)

This first event had been represented typically, year after year, by the High Priest under the Law,—who "was an express type of the MESSIAS and His priestly office. The atonement which He made was the representation of the propitiation in CHRIST for the sins of the World: and for the making this atonement, the High Priest was appointed once every year to enter into the Holy of Holies, and not oftener . . . He showed thereby that the 'High Priest of good things to come, by a greater and more perfect Tabernacle, not made with hands,' was to 'enter in once into the Holy Place, having obtained eternal Redemption for us.'^(u) The Jews did all believe that the Tabernacle did signify the World,^(x) and the Holy of Holies the highest heavens: wherefore, as the High Priest did slay the sacrifice, and with the blood thereof did pass through the rest of the Tabernacle, and with that blood enter into the Holy of Holies; so was the MESSIAS here to offer up Himself, and being slain, to pass through all the Courts of this World below, and with His blood to enter into the highest heavens,—the most glorious seat of the Majesty of GOD. Thus CHRIST'S Ascension was represented typically."^(y)—It contains distinct prophetic notice, in Psalm lxxviii. 28, and Micah ii. 13.

Thus then do we believe "that the Only-Begotten and Eternal Son of GOD, after He arose from the dead, did with the same soul and body with which He rose, by a true and local translation, convey Himself from the Earth, on which He lived, through all the regions of the air, through all the celestial orbs, until He came into the Heaven of Heavens, the most glorious presence of the Majesty of GOD."

His session "at the Right Hand of GOD," was in like manner foreshown both in type and prophecy. "Joseph, who was betrayed and sold by his brethren, was an express type of CHRIST; and though in many things he represented the MESSIAS, yet in none more than in this, that being taken out of the prison, he was exalted to the supreme power of Egypt." For, "this was a clear representation of the SON of Man, who, by His sitting on the Right Hand of GOD, obtained power to rule and govern all things both in Heaven and Earth."^(z)—No place of Prophecy, again, can be imagined more distinctly descriptive of this crowning event in our LORD'S History, than what is found in Psalm cx. 1;—a place which is accordingly found quoted on no less than four distinct occasions in the Gospel.^(a)

Now, "the Right Hand of GOD," is the place of perfect Happiness; according to that of the Psalmist, "At Thy Right Hand [are] pleasures for evermore."^(b) And the expression is used, first in regard of that absolute power and dominion which CHRIST hath obtained in Heaven;^(c) next, in regard of that Honour, Glory, and Majesty which He hath obtained there;^(d) lastly, because now, after all the labours and sorrows and sufferings of this world, He resteth above in unspeakable joy and everlasting felicity. The substance of the doctrine is, that sitting at the Right Hand of GOD was our MEDIATOR'S solemn entry upon His Royal office, as to the execution of that full dominion which was due unto Him: whereby was fulfilled the prophecy of the Angel Gabriel at His conception,—"The LORD GOD shall give unto Him the throne of His Father David; and He shall reign over the House of Jacob for ever, and of His Kingdom there shall be no end."^(e)

The Evangelist proceeds, in a single verse of his Gospel, to sum up the life-long labours of the Apostles of THE LAMB;—labours which have left no earthly record, but not one of which is forgotten in Heaven.

(g) Acts i. 3.

(r) St. Luke xxiv. 50.

(s) St. Luke xxiv. 50, 51.

(t) Acts i. 9.

(u) Heb. ix. 11, 12.

(x) Observe what light this throws on Heb. ix. 1.

(y) Bp. Pearson.

(z) Bp. Pearson: quoting Gen. xli. 40, 42, 43.

(a) Namely, in St. Matth. xxii. 44: Acts ii. 34, 35: Heb. i. 13: x. 12, 13.

(b) Ps. xvi. 11.

(c) Consider St. Matth. xxvi. 64.

(d) Consider Heb. i. 3; viii. 1.

(e) St. Luke i. 32, 33. The text is mostly from Bp. Pearson.

20 And they went forth, and preached every where, the LORD working with *them*, and confirming the Word with signs following. Amen.

"They went forth,"—but not immediately; for our LORD had already "commanded them that they should not depart from Jerusalem, but wait for the promise of the FATHER." (*f*) "Tarry ye in Jerusalem," (were His words,) "until ye be endued with power from on high." (*g*) But when the Day of Pentecost had come, and with it the promise of the COMFORTER had been fulfilled, "they went forth,"—furnished with "a mouth and wisdom, which all their adversaries were not able to gainsay nor resist." (*h*)

"Signs," (that is, *Miracles*.) followed their preaching of the Word,—as CHRIST had promised: (*i*) "for He is faithful that promised;" (*k*) and *He* "wrought with them." "Lo, I am with you alway," (such are the last words of St. Matthew's Gospel,) "even unto the end of the World. Amen."

The Reader is requested to refer to the remarks which have been already offered on those words.

Each of the Evangelists, in turn, concludes his Gospel with a word solemnly asserting the living Truth of the inspired record: a word of devout affirmation, which as it were sets the seal of the SPIRIT on every syllable that has gone before; and which declares the Evangelist to be,—like "the AMEN" of whom he writes,—a "faithful and true witness."

(*f*) Acts i. 4.

(*g*) St. Luke xxiv. 49.

(*h*) St. Luke xxi. 15.

(*i*) See above, verses 17, 18.

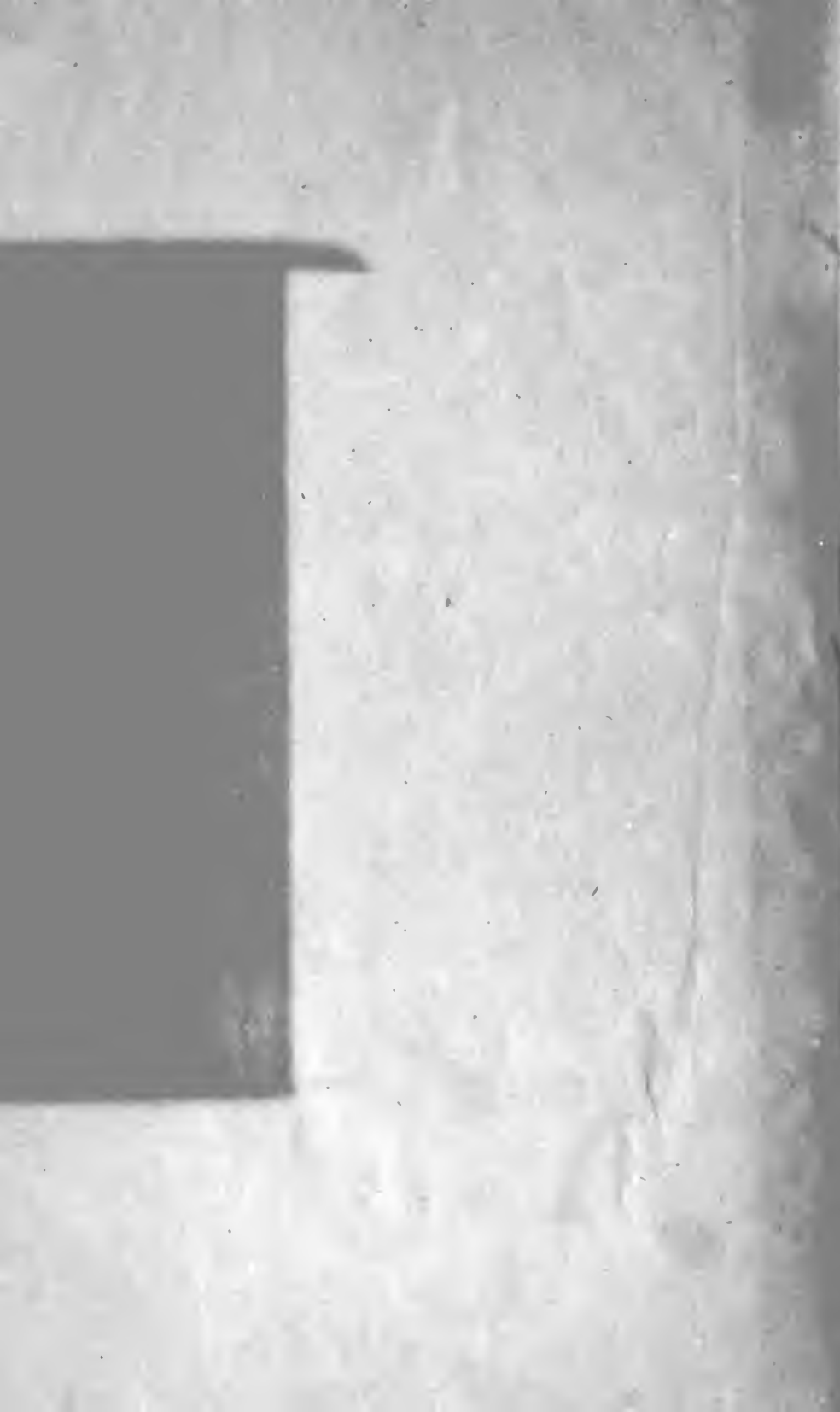
(*k*) Heb. x. 23.

THE PRAYER.

O GOD the King of Glory, who hast exalted Thine only SON JESUS CHRIST with great triumph unto Thy Kingdom in heaven; we beseech Thee, leave us not comfortless; but send to us Thine HOLY GHOST to comfort us, and exalt us unto the same place whither our SAVIOUR CHRIST is gone before, who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the HOLY GHOST, one GOD, world without end. Amen.







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